



*Mapping Gender
in Ancient Religious
Discourses*



TODD PENNER &
CAROLINE VANDER STICHELE

BRILL

Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses

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Edited by
Todd Penner
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PREFACE

The Editors

... [P]ower is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.

—Michel Foucault¹

The ways in which we have come to think about sexuality and gender in history have substantially changed since Michel Foucault suggested that such an analysis must be undertaken from the viewpoint of a history of discourses.² The essays that are collected in the present volume reflect this perspective to one degree or another. Ancient conceptions of gender are explored and interrogated throughout, with a special accent falling on the ways in which constructions of gender can be understood to intersect with religious discourses in antiquity, focusing particularly on rhetorical representation and modes of argumentation. Within that broader framework, the essays take the reader in quite diverse and varied directions. Some authors focus more on the intersection of gender and history, others examine the role of rhetoric more explicitly, others are interested in the female vanishing point of the texts in question, still others in the male discursive construction of identity or the gaps in the texts that hint at something beyond a binary gender formulation. What becomes clear in all of this is that gender and sex(uality) are understood as constituent elements of the ways in which humans thought about and constructed their identities in the ancient world—religious and otherwise.

Quite a substantial amount of work has already been conducted in the fields of Classical Studies and Late Antiquity in terms of engaging questions related to ancient uses and conceptions of gender; much less research in this vein, however, has been undertaken by biblical scholars. The idea behind the present volume was to address this perceived lack of attention. Another goal was to focus primarily

¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley; New York: Vintage, 1980), 86.

² *Ibid.*, 68–69.

on literary sources, exploring first and foremost the use of gender in explicit argumentation and representation. As a result, this collection seeks to cross some of the traditional boundaries between different areas of research, focusing on Jewish, early Christian and Greco-Roman materials both in isolation and interaction. Furthermore, although for the most part the writings being analyzed are to be located in the Roman imperial period, with some of the texts stemming from as late as the fourth century C.E., the material as a whole is largely situated in centers outside of Rome, whether in North Africa, Asia Minor or Palestine.

Like most collections of this sort, the final product is a reflection of the vagaries involved in producing such a book. On the one hand, there is more “Christian” material than may be warranted from a historical perspective and much less Jewish and Greco-Roman; on the other hand, while “non-canonical” material is analyzed and discussed, seeking to provide a fuller basis for “mapping” beyond the conventionally designated authoritative and hegemonic sources, there is still much literary territory left out. Yet, as an exploration of the ways that gender can be thought about at the intersection of the socio-cultural and historical contexts of antiquity, all of the essays herein provide a lens of analysis that can be redirected toward innumerable other texts. The order of the essays reflects something of this eclectic nature of the materials. It generally follows both a thematic and also chronological grouping, starting with essays on larger issues and gradually moving into more detailed discussions of particular texts. Many of the essays do, in our minds, contribute to the broader aim of constructing a cartography of the role of gender in religious discourse in antiquity and, conversely, the religious dimensions of the conceptualization, representation and performance of gender. Since, as these essays also make clear, maps of the same territory can in fact be detailed in variant ways (depending on what kind of map one is composing), it is also evident to us at the end of this project that, despite the impressive array of scholarship assembled and implemented in this collection, it would all look quite different if recalibrated from another angle or if the territory were mapped from some other vantage point.

The majority of the essays that have been brought together here were presented at the International Society of Biblical Literature meetings in the summers of 2003 and 2004 in Cambridge (England) and Groningen (The Netherlands), respectively. We are grateful to

Matthew Collins for his efforts in organizing these meetings abroad and in making it easy for us to arrange panels and sessions around the areas that we believe constitute some of the critical methodological sites of engagement in the field of early Christian studies. The “Whence and Whither: Methodology and the Future of Biblical Studies” program unit that we co-chair has been an especially productive and delightful forum in which to explore and to (re)examine a host of issues related to the field and we feel fortunate to have had such rich discussions and presentations over the years. Patrick Alexander (formerly of Brill) expressed great interest in this volume when we approached him about it; his enthusiasm and encouragement provided the initial stimulus in getting this project off the ground. We are also grateful to R. Alan Culpepper and the rest of the Biblical Interpretation Series editors for their willingness to include this collection of essays in their series. A special thanks goes to Louise Schouten, Ivo Romein, Caroline van Erp and Renee Otto at Brill for their efforts in seeing this volume through the final stages of production.

At Austin College, this book first took shape in a combined upper level Religious and Gender Studies class. The students in that Friday afternoon seminar made the initial work on these essays enjoyable and rewarding. Special mention is in order for the superb level of interaction and effort by Karen Lewis, Michelle Howard and Martha Pierce. Joseph Marchal, who was the Lilly Visiting Assistant Professor at Austin College in 2005–2006, joined our seminar conversation on occasion. His always stimulating and provocative comments on the essays proved invaluable in the early stages of editing. Moreover, when the editing would bog down, his gentle “nice” words of encouragement were consistently timely. Lindy Olsen provided her usual perceptive analysis and offered help with the editing. We are also appreciative of the travel support provided by our respective institutions, Austin College (Sherman, Texas) and the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) at the University of Amsterdam, without whose backing this project would likely not have made its way to publication.

Finally, it should be noted that translations of ancient materials in this collection are often taken from the respective Loeb Classical Library editions, but in many essays individual authors have themselves also translated the relevant material. Generally a note is made in the different contributions detailing the source of the translations. Further, abbreviations for primary sources are provided in the “Index of Ancient Sources” found at the back of the volume.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AJSR	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
AN	<i>Ancient Narrative</i>
ANF	Alexander Roberts et al. <i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325</i> . 10 vols. Repr, Grand Rapids, 1965
ANSup	Ancient Narrative Supplementum
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ASP	American Studies in Papyrology
BAGD	Bauer, W., F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2d ed. Chicago, 1979
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BjRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BMCR	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i>
BMCRE	Mattingly, H., et al. <i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> . 6 vols. London, 1923–1976
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CA	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History

CCSA	Corpus Christianorum: Series apocryphorum. Turnhout, 1983–
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series latina. Turnhout, 1953–
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum latinorum
<i>CSSH</i>	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by H. Balz, G. Schneider ET. Grand Rapids, 1990–1993
EPRO	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’empire romain
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church. Washington, D.C., 1947–
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HR</i>	<i>History of Religions</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JHistS</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JMEMS</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JRAM	Journal of Roman Archaeology Monograph
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>

<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> . Edited by J. Boardman. 18 vols. Zürich, 1981–
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
LXX	Septuagint
MnSup	Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava: Supplement Series
<i>MScRel</i>	<i>Mélanges de science religieuse</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth. 3d ed. Oxford, 1996
<i>OTP</i>	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
PG	Patrologia graeca [= Patrologiae cursus completes: Series graeca]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Papyri graecae magicae: Dei griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . Edited by K. Preisendanz. Berlin, 1928
PL	Patrologia Latina [= Patrologiae cursus completes: Series Latina]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>PSB</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>PW</i>	Pauly, A. F. <i>Pauly's Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . New Edition. Edited by G. Wissowa and W. Kroll. 24 vols. Stuttgart, 1894–1963

<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> . Edited by T. Kluser et al. Stuttgart, 1950–
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue des études augustinienes</i>
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>RIDA</i>	<i>Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité</i>
<i>Riv Fil</i>	<i>Rivista di filologia</i>
RTAM	Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testaments
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSemS	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposia Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBLWGRW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Greco-Roman World
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
SEAug	Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>Second Century</i>
SHC	Studies in Hellenistic Civilization
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra pagina
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TCH	Transformation of the Classical Heritage
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
ThH	Théologie historique
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TSMEMJ	Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>USQR</i>	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>

<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
VCSup	Vigiliae christianae Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

MAPPING AS METAMORPHOSIS:
INITIAL REFLECTIONS ON GENDER AND ANCIENT
RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

Virginia Burrus

“The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation.”—Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari¹

Mapping, whether viewed from the perspective of cartography, mathematics or cognitive science, is an act of translation—or, perhaps better yet, of transformation. A mapping constructs a relationship between two domains (sometimes referred to by theorists of conceptual metaphors as the “source” and the “target”); put differently, it generates a second codomain (as mathematicians name it) out of the potentialities of an originary domain, by establishing the conditions for metamorphosis. Mapping is, then, an inherently creative process, giving rise to novel entities and insights. Precisely to the extent that the map *becomes* the territory, mapping generates whole new worlds of image, symbol or text. *Mapping gender*, in the case of this volume, is a process that manifests within ancient religious discourses, as gender is produced iteratively at multiple sites and according to largely unpredictable (even chaotic) orders of causality. It is also a process that takes place in the equally fertile and open-ended establishment of a relationship between *us* and *them*. As *we* map our gender onto theirs, so too do *they* map theirs onto ours, in a doubled movement at once retrospective and anticipatory. The process is inherently unstable: with each repetition, the territory shifts under our feet.

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans. B. Massumi; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 10.

A mere decade or so ago, a volume dealing with gender and the religions of late antiquity would likely have been dominated by essays reconstructing the social history of women within so-called paganism, Judaism and Christianity, respectively, and/or exposing the politics of patriarchy and the cultures of misogyny that pervade and inflect the surviving literature of the ancient Mediterranean. In other words, the history of gender would have been conceived as the history of women. (I remember a colleague querying me in the early 1990's about whether the title of a course I was offering—"Women and Gender in Early Christianity"—wasn't in fact redundant.) A feminist commitment might have been both baldly evident and relatively monolithic in its articulated goals and assumptions. Most if not all of the authors would, moreover, probably have been women. The essays collected here testify to shifts in scholarly mappings that have taken place in the meantime. Gender is no longer simply code for women or the feminine and its scholarship is no longer the province of females or even self-declared feminists. Indeed, gender has become a rather notably ambiguous signifier. Where this is acknowledged rather than covered over by tidy definitions, the ambiguity that attends the term is rendered productive, I believe.

At a basic level, gender now signals interest in the social construction of men's roles as well as women's and/or in the discursive production of masculinity as well as femininity. The extent to which the study of men or masculinity is rooted in the political-theoretical critique of feminism varies, though one might argue that the very awareness that manhood can, indeed *must*, be rendered an object of critical analysis derives from feminist insights and potentially (if by no means inevitably) profits feminist goals. As the interdependence of the binary categories of masculinity and femininity come to be widely acknowledged, figures that disrupt or trouble the binaries also emerge into visibility—effeminate men, virile women, the intersexed, the transgendered, the genderqueer. Assessment of the cultural or socio-political potentialities presented by ambiguously gendered figures remains open to debate, even (or perhaps particularly) among overtly feminist scholars. How much chaos can our mappings accommodate? How much order do they desire to impose?

The language of gender does not, however, merely signify the inclusion of men, the intersexed or the transgendered as subjects and objects of study. It also opens onto tension between sociological approaches, on the one hand, and linguistic or psychoanalytic approaches, on the

other, the latter more commonly associated with the terminology of sexual difference (rather than gender) and the traditions of continental (rather than anglophone) scholarship. At the same time, a question must now be raised regarding the standpoint from which either socially ascribed gender or discursively inscribed sexual difference can be engaged with a view toward their critique or transformation. The categories of woman or the feminine, for example, can no longer be appealed to straightforwardly as the self-evident objects of feminist historical reconstruction, as these are arguably the products of the very structures of domination that feminism seeks to expose and subvert. Yet if gender/sexual difference is simply that which is performatively produced in shifting historical and cultural contexts (a perspective that resonates both with current trends in critical theory and with current views of the centrality of performance in late ancient Mediterranean culture), how do we move from analyzing what is or has been to announcing the advent of what might or should be? (Do we even care or dare to do so?) Where appeals to essences, origins and foundations have for good reason fallen into disrepute, what might be the grounds for new eschatologies? What might be the grounds, in other words, for either judgment or hope? Here, again, the character of mapping may offer a tentative clue: our own mappings of the mappings of ancient texts extend an iterative process of transformation that conveys both orders of intentionality and degrees of unpredictability that exceed teleological constraint.

But there is more. Feminist traditions have themselves given rise to the acknowledgement that neither gender nor sexual difference operates independently of other structurings of power and other formations of identity or subjectivity. Class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and colonialism intersect with and thus inflect gender, inevitably and irreducibly. So too does religion. Mappings are synchronically complex and never simply uni-directional, in other words. It follows that women and men are not all the same, even *as* women and men; such terms demarcate positionalities both distinctly unstable and fissured by difference, joined also at times by unexpected, even unpredictable, affinities or alliances.

Studies of the ancient Mediterranean world have been powerfully enhanced by the current awareness of the complexity that the politics of identity both reveals and covers over. In particular, heterogeneity strives with universalism where the forces of empire and colonialism produce multiple and charged cultural contact zones. At the borderlines

of oppression, not only resistance but also enormous creativity is encountered in the production of hybridized subjects. How do we read or map gender at such complexly determined and politically ambivalent sites? How, furthermore, do we read or map gender across religious affiliation, breaking through prior barriers of disciplinary practice that have separated scholars of Christianity, Judaism and pagan or “classical” antiquity, without thereby losing all traction on the particularity of religious cult or culture, shifty and overlapping as these mappings may prove to be? (The challenges to conventional historiography can here scarcely be overestimated, as these pivot not least around the mapping of the eventual christianization of the Roman Empire.)

How, finally, do we negotiate or map the irreducible differences and seductive affinities that both separate and join *us* and *them*? Has the border between scholarly subject and object not been rendered queerly permeable?

* * *

The essays in this collection, performing close readings of a variety of ancient Mediterranean texts and artifacts, contribute to the ongoing scholarly mapping of the complex domain of late ancient gender. I will not try to paraphrase the authors’ arguments, for they should be allowed to speak for themselves. I will, rather, touch briefly on what seem to me several significant convergences or points of contact among the various contributions—namely, gender and masculinity, gender and sexuality, gender and the body, and gender and empire. As we shall see, these convergences themselves map onto each other in multiple ways. Do they also bring us finally to a consideration of the particular relation of *gender* to *religion*?

GENDER AND MASCULINITY

There is by now widespread scholarly agreement that gender in antiquity was mapped not as a binary of two fixed and “opposite” sexes (as is typical of our own modern western culture) but rather as a dynamic spectrum or gradient of relative masculinities. On the positively valorized end of the spectrum were “true men,” fully masculine; on the negatively valorized end, “true women,” lacking masculinity. For men, the challenge was to establish virility and to avoid

sliding down the slippery slope of feminization. This challenge shaped the terms of rivalry and contestation that allowed for both the making and the unmaking of men. Women were, in turn, expected to conform to their essentially feminine nature and a drift toward the masculine pole was typically deemed highly suspect (Swancutt). That there were partial exceptions to this rule should not surprise us, given tensions arising from the model's competing construals of nature, which affirmed both gender's desired transformation toward the potentiality represented by masculine perfection and the inherent inability of some to achieve such a transformation—thus the inappropriateness that they should even *try*. Conceptually, then, women are at once *hyper*natural (queerly fixed by their essential lack of masculinity) and *un*natural (either thwarting or perverting gender's natural drive toward masculine completion); in both cases, their positioning is mapped as a secondary effect of assertions made by and for masculinity. Rhetorically, it must be acknowledged, representations of women often also appear to have little to do with women per se, serving rather to mediate assertions of masculine identity or status (Schwartz). The period of the early Roman Empire seems to have represented an especially volatile chapter in the history of masculine gender, inaugurating transitions in political structures and cultural values that rendered manhood more than ever open to negotiation on the stages of public performance.

The essays in this volume themselves offer a spectrum of interpretations of this ancient gradient of masculinity, as is particularly revealed in their varying treatments of ambiguously gendered figures. Some of the authors expose the use of such figures to discipline gender transgression by sternly reinscribing sissies or viragos as deviant, thereby naturalizing “given” hierarchies of power—man over woman; master over slave; Roman over non-Roman; rational thinker over heretic, magician or charlatan (Ivarsson, Gunderson, Stratton, Swancutt, Windon). Others discover in those same figures the decisive subversion and denaturalization of such hierarchies (Perkins). Still others seem to suggest the ambivalence as well as the ambiguity of figures such as the *cinaidos*, the *tribad* or the *androgyne*, reading them as sites of a slyly subversive mimicry (to invoke Homi Bhabha's language)² that both appropriates and perverts the terms of the very hegemonic

² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

inscription that it nonetheless cannot entirely evade (Frilingos, Kessler, Knust, Thurman). This third path of interpretation resonates intriguingly with the positioning of the *cinaidos/tribad/androgynē* as a monstrous third gender in the ancient texts. It thus replays the act of mimicry that gives articulation (to borrow Luce Irigaray's phrasing)³ to "the sex that is not one" but rather multiple—that is, in other words, other than masculine, a category that includes but does not privilege the feminine within its multiplicity. Does such an interpretation thereby map onto ancient texts possibilities of subversive deconstruction that may not have been accessible to their authors or earliest readers? Do either our sources or our methods allow us to answer this question confidently? And how or why might the answer matter?

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Sexuality may often best be understood as a site for the inscription of gender in antiquity. Relations of penetration, pervasively mapped onto structures of domination, established relative positionings of power on the spectrum of masculinity and were construed independently of any category like that of our modern notion of fixed object choice or "orientation." Sexuality or the erotic does not, however, therefore disappear from sight in ancient texts, having been swallowed up by gender; on the contrary, it is powerfully in evidence. Sexual acts constituted particularly charged, frequently overt sadomasochistic performances that both exploited and parodied relations of domination and submission while also exposing the radical malleability of gender. Markedly ambivalent representations of prostitutes (Frilingos, Ivarsson), adulterous triangles (Schwartz) and daemonic or magical enslavement to eros (Gunderson, Knust, Stratton, Thurman, Windon) particularly draw our attention here, as the excesses of desire are not only chastised but also transformed in sometimes startling ways.

Moreover, the trend toward asceticism that characterizes many texts of this period stridently reoriented desire toward the divine. If such a sublimation may be appropriately understood to constitute the repression of sexuality as conventionally defined and practiced, it also mobilizes desire in the very service of that repression: eros is

³ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (trans. C. Porter; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

bent or queered, as the subject is seduced to desire *differently*. Is the subject also thereby differently gendered? Ancient texts generate a variety of affirmative answers. The ascetic programs of Philo and Clement of Alexandria, for example, allowed for a partial leveling of gender distinctions—but they did so primarily by allowing women to be assimilated to ideals of masculinity, even as they also ambiguously feminized those ideals via, for example, the foregrounding of the virtues of chastity or submission (D’Angelo, Desjardins). The sophist Lucian satirizes the hypersexual Alexander in order to instruct and train manly and rational subjects (Gunderson). From another view, representing a trajectory of Jewish mystical tradition quite different in some respects from the Hellenistic culture embodied by Philo and many Christians and pagans, Hekhalot literature forcibly inscribes an exclusively masculine subject of ascetically erotic transformation (Lesses).

GENDER AND BODY

The body encountered as a site of human fragility leads to particularly complex articulations of gender, especially in a culture as saturated by experiences and spectacles of physical violence as that of the early Roman Empire. Attempts to produce the invulnerable body of masculine dominance through the shaming display of bodies subjugated and thus unmanned vie with, and bend back upon, apparent acknowledgements of the susceptibility to suffering that characterizes *all* human bodies, as well as the power that potentially inheres in suffering itself. In the performances of gladiators, martyrs and others subjected to public trials and tests of virtue, including the heroes and heroines of romance literature (Schwartz, Thurman), the gendering of vulnerability was queered: in particular, the capacity for endurance was revalued, bridging the gap between the passive and the active, the feminine and the masculine—thereby producing an effective remapping and transgendering of virtue. Martyrs might also be mothers (regardless of whether they were “women” or “men”) and maternity was a trope that exposed the collusion of suffering and creativity taking place when the body delivered its witness against tyranny (Perkins).

Where the Christian writer Tertullian, much like the authors of martyrologies, rejoices in the passionate suffering of flesh that is the

unexpected source of its glorious metamorphosis (Perkins), his contemporary Clement of Alexandria gives more restrained voice to the ideal of a body transformed by an ascetic training regime that exerts a degree of control so radical that the self is not only rendered safe in the face of worldly vicissitudes but is also thereby (and paradoxically) freed of all that impedes its striving toward the good (Desjardins). The apostle Paul and the sophist Lucian similarly (although, of course, not identically) advocate programs of embodied *paideia* that liberate subjects from the vulgar tug of sexual desire, material greed and idolatrous or superstitious cult in order to pursue a life devoted to Reason or Logos (Ivarsson, Gunderson).

GENDER AND EMPIRE

Empire sets the stage for the performances of gender considered in most of the essays in this volume, as has already become evident. Imperial iconography aggressively asserted Roman dominance as a triumph of masculinity, representing conquered “races” or “nations” as women or effeminate males, displayed in images that frequently carry overtones of erotic subjugation (Lopez). Orientalizing tendencies are evident not only in such explicit representations of barbarian defeat but also in the contemporaneous Roman fascination with hermaphroditic and tribadic figures. These disturbing images of gendered monstrosity were mapped onto ethnic (Greek) “others” in apparent displacement of anxieties regarding destabilizations of gender roles closer to home—for example, the increasingly active political roles exercised by elite Roman women (Swancutt), as well as the potential threat to Roman manhood presented by imperial rule itself, which might seem to threaten to turn all citizens into virtual slaves even as it made an unmanly tyrant of the emperor.

That representations of transgressively gendered others within Roman imperial discourse might turn out to be double-edged is suggested by a number of the essays. The very figures introduced to deride and discipline unmanliness also offered sites for resistance to a masculinized imperial authority. Paul’s chosen mission to the “nations” (i.e., non-Jews) takes on new meaning when Jews themselves are understood to be interpellated among the nations conquered and thus effeminized by Rome (Lopez). So too does Mark’s representation of Jesus as a tortured victim who achieves victory only through

vulnerability (Thurman), the sophist Favorinus's self-presentation as a natural eunuch or John the Seer's depiction of his messiah in the grotesque figure of a slain lamb (Frilingos). Yet resistance itself is complex: colonized discourses not only competed with Roman imperialism but also imitated or appropriated many of its claims and strategies. In the canonical Acts, for example, Luke invokes the authority of a innovatively narrated past to legitimate the universalizing and expansionist claims of a Christian *imperium* (Penner/Vander Stichele) while both Philo and Justin appeal to Jewish and Christian sexual morality and "family values" to turn the tables on a Roman authority that could thereby be shown to fall short by comparison, having failed to live up to its own ideals of virtue and virility (D'Angelo, Knust). Does accommodation here begin to overtake resistance? Again, this is a question that may be difficult to answer conclusively, either historically or theoretically, although it presses with particular urgency in our own political moment. How totalizing is the power of the discourse of empire? How effective are the subversions that arise from within the terms of this very discourse?

GENDER AND RELIGION

The mutual mapping of gender and religion is implicitly the theme of this volume yet this theme is not explicitly or expansively addressed in any of the essays. I'd like, therefore, to pose the question: What do these essays collectively have to say about *gender* and *ancient religious discourses*? Religion itself is of course a distinctly modern concept all too often mapped uncritically onto ancient texts. However, one might also say that it is in late antiquity that something *like* a mapping of religious identity first emerges, as a complex effect of both Roman imperialism and the rise of Christianity, each of which profoundly unsettles prior links between ethnicity, locality and cult, thus giving rise to discursive strategies of ethical-religious subjectification partly disembedded from race or place. Here Lucian provides an interestingly complicated case, as he offers, from the margins of empire, an innovative and universalizing version of "Greek" *paideia* as a competing alternative to religious cult or culture (Gunderson). Late ancient Jewish texts typically display tension between universalizing and racially or genealogically inscribed identity (D'Angelo, Kessler, Lesses). Most of the essays in this volume suggest, however, that gender

played a strong role in the agonistic articulation of nascent religious identity and difference, whether Christian, Jewish or “pagan.” Is religious discourse then mapped in antiquity as a competition among cultural claimants of masculine perfection? Alternatively, is it mapped as an irruption of ambivalently subversive or counterhegemonic genders to which empire paradoxically gives rise? I would answer both of these in the affirmative. Again we face an ambivalence that is mapped across *our* texts and *theirs*.

Yet we may cut still closer to the heart of the matter if we consider the ways that religious discourse as well as the discourse of gender in this period so often turns on the power of *transformation*. Perhaps, then as now, there is a peculiar collusion—a strong mutual mapping—between gendered and religious subjectivities that occurs in the awe-full acknowledgement of creaturely instability and mutability, of humanity’s monstrous capacity for metamorphosis. “Metamorphosis is at the radical point in the system, at the point where there is no longer any law or symbolic order,” suggests Jean Baudrillard. He continues thus: “It is a process without any subject, beyond death, beyond any desire, in which only the rules of the game of form are involved . . . Love is no longer considered as a dependence of desire upon lack, but in the unconscious form of the transformation into the other.”⁴

If *mapping* thus constitutes a metamorphosis in which orders (or, as Baudrillard would prefer, “the rules of the game of form”) give rise to their own self-exceeding, perhaps love—eros—is at the crux of the transformations that occur both within and across the complex domains of gender and religion.

⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1987), 75.

STILL BEFORE SEXUALITY:
“GREEK” ANDROGYNY, THE ROMAN IMPERIAL
POLITICS OF MASCULINITY AND THE ROMAN
INVENTION OF THE *TRIBAS*¹

Diana M. Swancutt

In his *Epigrams*, Martial censures a certain Bassa for not being a Lucretia—a model Roman matron (1.90). Bassa is rather a *fututor* (“male fucker”), a “counterfeit man” who “joins cunts” with h/is “monstrous ‘penis.’”² Likewise, in the Elder Seneca’s *Controversies*, Greek orators describe a husband who caught his wife and another *tribas in flagrante*, upon which he had to inspect “the man” to see how he had penetrated her. In her pivotal essay, “Female Homoeroticism and the Denial of Roman Reality in Latin Literature,” Judith Hallett highlighted the rhetorical techniques of hellenization, anachronization and phallicization operative in such Latin depictions of the *tribas*. She argued that elite Roman men from Plautus to Juvenal employed these tropes to deny that Roman women were in fact *tribades*, whom she defined as homoerotic women.³ Hallett’s recognition of the ideological character of these portraits remains a crucial advance in the study of the *tribas*, for it leads us to pose several as yet unanswered questions regarding the impact of Roman imperialism on the figure. Why, for example, did the Romans use a *Greek* word (*tribas*) to describe them?⁴ Why did they treat *tribades* as *Greek* gender-monsters while Greeks merely mocked the purported equivalent, *hetairistriaí*, as burly, low-class courtesans? Why in the Roman period is there only one extant depiction of a woman penetrating another woman, while

¹ A previous version of this essay was presented at the International Society of Biblical Literature meeting in Cambridge, England (July 2003). It is dedicated to Dale Martin, Woolsey Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, for his friendship, professional encouragement and scholarly example.

² Unless I indicate otherwise, all translations are taken from the LCL series. This particular translation is my own.

³ Judith P. Hallett, “Female Homoeroticism and the Denial of Roman Reality in Latin Literature,” in *Roman Sexualities* (ed. J. P. Hallett and M. B. Skinner; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 255–73 (originally published 1989).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

scenes of *hetairai* stroking and sucking dildos are common in Greek vase-painting?⁵ Finally, why did the term *tribas* first appear only with the beginning of the Roman Empire?

In this essay I propose that the *tribas* was a Roman ideological invention, an imperial stereotype of androgynous Greek gender-monsters enervating the empire, which Roman *viri* deployed rhetorically to control their most powerful inferiors, Roman matrons and Greeks. To make this case I argue that 1) the Roman ideology of tribadism deals with the perceived threat of physical gender transformation and 2) the interethnic and imperial dynamics of Roman gender ideology are central to the meaning of the term. On the first point, I emphasize that Roman gender ideology assumed the existence of the hermaphrodite or androgyne, a body-form or gender identified by h/is possession of masculine (penis) and feminine (vagina) physical traits, h/is transformation from one gender to the other or h/is body-flux between masculine and feminine forms.⁶ Elite Romans, who treated intercourse as a sociopolitical act of penetration (masculine) or submission (feminine) that helped to define a subject's gender, also typically assumed that gender-deviant sex acts could transform one into an androgyne. Finally, Roman imperial gender ideology portrayed androgyny as a foreign gender monstrosity that evidenced disease in the Roman body and portended social upheaval and interethnic war. Read in light of these concerns about androgyny, the Latin emphasis on the phallicization of the *tribas* paints the figure as an androgynous gender-monster (*teras/monstrum*) or prodigy (*teras/prodigium*) defined by the physical, social and imperial effects of h/is gender-liminal activity as a sexual penetrator. The *tribas* did not depict a woman derided for

⁵ John R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100 B.C. to A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), plate 13. Also see John R. Clarke, *Roman Sex 100 B.C.–A.D. 250* (New York: Abrams, 2003), 127; and Luciana Jacobelli, *Le pitture erotiche delle Terme suburbane di Pompei* (Monografie/Ministero per i Beni culturali ed ambientali, Soprintendenza archeologica di Pompei 10; Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1995). Jacobelli argued that the Pompeian figure depicts a standing man penetrating a reclining woman. According to Clarke (*Roman Sex*, 127), Jacobelli now thinks they are both women. While the standing figure penetrates the reclining woman as a man would, both figures have pale skin and the same hair style, a manner in which women were often portrayed (*ibid.*, 128). On dildos, see Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, 228; and Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 82–86, figs. 72–80.

⁶ Because English lacks pronouns for genders other than male and female, I refer to the *tribas* by splitting nouns and pronouns (e.g., "wo/man," "s/he," "h/is" and "h/er").

homoerotic acts or a *woman* derided for gender-transgressive sexual activity, but a *distinct gender*, a sexually penetrative hermaphrodite or a phallicized woman whose sexual activity androgynized her body, thrusting h/im and Roman society into a state of gender-flux.

I further argue that the figure of the *tribas* reflected Roman anxieties of empire; it was an imperialistic gender stereotype that Roman men deployed to communicate with each other about the perceived threat Roman matrons and Greeks posed to Roman male dominance over the empire. Elite Roman men had lost political control to the emperor at the same time that Roman matrons were gaining political clout and Greeks were crafting an identity as a subject people with their own august cultural and imperial group history. Roman matrons were Roman men's *proximate other*, the most immediate threat to their power, and Greeks were their *ethnic and imperial other*, those whose cultural cachet Romans were both attracted to and suspicious of.⁷ Roman men viewed these groups as threats to their virility, which they equated with dominion over all "others." They responded by stereotyping their proximate other (politically active Roman matrons) as pawns of their ethnic other (Greeks); they caricatured matrons as *tribades*, as Greek gender-freaks who rose above their natural place as gender-passives and threatened Roman male dominion through their Hellenic, phallicized sexual activity. By imagining *tribades* as the embodiment of Greek gender-disease enervating the empire, Roman men reminded fellow elites of the disorder that would follow if Roman matrons gained the power of, and became like, Roman men. Sexually active matrons would screw the empire by giving entrée to eastern ways. The Roman imperial politics of gender thus produced and governed the figure of the *tribas*.

WORDS AND WORLDS:

ON "SEXUALITY," THE TWO SEXES AND THE "IDENTITY" OF THE *TRIBAS*

Because Judith Hallett's focus on the rhetorical character of the *tribas* was groundbreaking, her definition of tribadism as female homoeroticism and her link of the phallicization of the *tribas* with the denial of actual female homoeroticism in Rome strongly influenced

⁷ See Brad Windon's essay in this volume for the use of these conceptual identifying practices in Tertullian's construction of gender and heresy (cf. the essays by Jennifer Knust, Kimberly Stratton and Erik Gunderson).

later studies of the figure. Building on Hallett's conclusions, Bernadette Brooten highlighted the gender dynamics of female homoeroticism in the wider Greco-Roman world, arguing that men painted women-loving women (*tribades*) as phallic because actual intercourse between women, which did not require a penis, violated the ancient penetrator-penetrated gender schema for sex.⁸ Marilyn Skinner builds on these insights, suggesting that the *tribas* was a Roman stereotype of homoerotic females as phallic women.⁹ Each of these scholars offers important insights that, when revised in light of androgyny, shape the results in this essay: the *tribas* is a Roman stereotype (Skinner) of a phallic (Hallett) wo/man or hermaphrodite that is gendered (Brooten) and hellenized (Hallett).

But the interpretive grid these scholars share, that of "homoeroticism," distorts their results by leading them to interpret the figure primarily as a function of the *sameness* of the participants' sex and, by extension, as a referent to actual homoerotic women in Rome.¹⁰ Although the use of "homoeroticism" reflects historians' efforts to avoid the modern discourse of "sexuality" as a description of ancient sex—a category that has nevertheless regained currency in the study of ancient eros—the discursive category of "*homoeroticism*" is a similarly

⁸ Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (The Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁹ Marilyn B. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 252–53.

¹⁰ For example, Skinner first describes the *tribas* as the stereotype of a woman who is anomalous because she is phallic and penetrates (different sexual targets). But she ends by eliding that rhetorical image with the "real" category of love between women. The potential force of her earlier observation is weakened by that elision. Similarly, Brooten (*Love between Women*, 5, esp. n. 7) translates Hesychios's *Lexikon* (fifth century C.E.) entry on *dihetairstriai* thus: "women, who, like men, are oriented toward female companions for sex, just like *tribades*" (*gunaikes hai tetrammenai pros tas hetairas epi synousia os hoi andres. Hoion tribades*). But the text is better translated this way: "women who, like men, have turned toward female companions for social intercourse. Synonym *tribades*." The perfect middle/passive participle of *trepō* ("to turn, direct") emphasizes a change of behavior and/or choice, not orientation. That is, these women "have been turned" or "have turned themselves" toward women companions; *synousia* here means "society," "companionship," the equivalent of which is *koinōnia*, not exclusively sex; *hetairai* recalls high-class courtesans associated with *symposium* settings (cf. Plato, *Symp.* 189b–92b, which states that *hetairistrai* are a subgroup of women who prefer the company of women to men); and the phrase "like men" is central to the definition. In other words, Hesychios's dictionary treats *dihetairstriai* not as women with an orientation toward women for sex but as women who act like (high-status) men in seeking out the companionship of *hetairai*. On the problems with retrojecting the fifth-century C.E. equation of *dihetairstriai* and *tribades* into the first century C.E., see the conclusion to this essay.

modern, Western substitute. Like “sexuality,” it treats the biological sex of one’s sex-partner, taxonomized on the equally modern two-sex model of the human body, as the defining feature of eroticism. Because the two-sex model remains a key component of the category of homoeroticism, use of that category pushes scholars unwittingly to portray ancient sex acts in modern terms, as “sexuality,” that is, the desire for sex between persons of the same (*homo-*) or other (*hetero-*) sex.

In his watershed book *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, David Halperin declared the death of “sexuality” as an interpretive grid for intercourse in the classical Greek period. Building on Michel Foucault’s insights, he argued that sexuality was a culturally specific product of the nineteenth-century inventions of medical science and psychology.¹¹ Medical science produced the concept of sexuality as a biological orientation to one (or both) of two sexes and psychology added the notion that humans have an innate, psychological drive for intercourse. In other words, “sexuality” as a category of identity distinct from gender was born when the sciences together redefined people previously identified as “gender-inverts” as “homosexuals” naturally oriented toward intercourse with a person of the same sex. Halperin then contrasted this modern construction with that of the classical Greek period, arguing that Greeks viewed intercourse as a gendered sociopolitical act and explained sex acts by using the gender binary: masculine/penetrative/active and feminine/receptive/passive.¹² In the same year, Halperin reinforced that view by publishing (with John Winkler and Froma Zeitlin) the now classic study, *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, a collection of essays that confirmed his claim regarding the gendered and social nature of Greek sex.¹³ But Amy Richlin responded in her justly famous essay “Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men”¹⁴ that self-identified homosexuals actually existed in Rome: “It would really be fair to say that Suetonius describes Claudius

¹¹ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 15–40.

¹² *Ibid.*, 21, 32–33.

¹³ David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹⁴ Amy Richlin, “Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men,” *JHistS* 3 (1993): 523–73.

as a 'heterosexual,' Galba as a 'homosexual,' Caesar and Augustus as having had 'homosexual' phases or episodes in their youth, and Nero as a no-holds-barred omnisexual Sadeian libertine."¹⁵ Just a few years later, Holt Parker replied to Richlin with precision: "sexuality" as an ideological concept was foreign to both Greeks and Romans and, if our goal is to understand ancient concepts of sex, to call ancients "homosexuals" was not just meaningless but also misleading.¹⁶ Craig Williams likewise responded, arguing that *cinaedi* were not passive homosexuals but gender-liminal barely-men.¹⁷

Although some scholars have continued to use "sexuality" and even "homosexuality" to describe Greek and Roman sexual ideologies,¹⁸ most classicists acknowledge Halperin's two-fold point regarding the modernity of "sexuality" and the gendered nature of the ancient penetrator-penetrated framework for sex. As a result, some employ "homoeroticism" (or a synonym) as a less culturally-loaded descriptor of "same-sex love."¹⁹ Others who argue that the construction of sexuality is foundational to the category of homoeroticism instead use the plural "sexualities," arguing that Roman "sexualities" are defined not by the biological sex of one's sex partner but by "its method of assigning identity—upon discrete [sexual] practices."²⁰ So Parker de-

¹⁵ Ibid., 532.

¹⁶ Holt N. Parker, "The Teratogenic Grid," in Hallett and Skinner, *Roman Sexualities*, 47–65, esp. 60–63. On *cinaedi*, see Maud W. Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E.," in Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 389–415, esp. 411–12; and Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 209–15.

¹⁸ See, for example, Luc Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence: Androgyny and Hermaphroditism in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (trans. J. Lloyd; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Clarke, *Roman Sex*; Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*; Keith De Vries, "The 'Frigid Eromenoi' and Their Woovers Revisited: A Closer Look at Greek Homosexuality in Vase Painting," in *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures* (ed. M. Duberman; New York: New York University Press, 1997), 14–24; and Rabun Taylor, "Two Pathic Subcultures in Ancient Rome," *JHistS* 7 (1997): 319–71.

¹⁹ See, for example, Broton, *Love between Women*, 8; Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Lisa Auanger, eds., *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Holger Szesnat, "Philo and Female Homoeroticism: Philo's Use of γυναιδρεος and Recent Work on Tribades," *JStJ* 30 (1999): 140–47; and Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*.

²⁰ Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 18, citing Parker, "Teratogenic Grid." See Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*; and Michael Satlow, *Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality* (BJS 303; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

scribes the teratogenic grid upon which Romans identified sexual actions as “active” or “passive” based on the orifice (vagina, anus, mouth) a person penetrated (*vir* or “Roman citizen-male”) or in which they were penetrated (*pathicus* or “passive not-man”; *femina* or “woman”).²¹

Because it acknowledges the plurality of sexual practices that could identify a subject and does not focus on the biological sex of a subject’s sex-partner, “sexualities” is somewhat better than “(homo)eroticism” as a descriptor of ancient intercourse. But all of these terms (“sexuality,” “eroticism” and “sexualities”) basically distinguish one’s “sexuality” from one’s “gender.” The problem is that this is a modern distinction; the notion that one has *discrete* sexual and gendered identities is itself a product of the very scientific and psychological movements that gave rise to the concept of “sexuality” in the first place.²² Halperin’s crucial insight was precisely that ancient Greek sex acts, “active” and “passive,” were gendered “masculine” and “feminine,” respectively. Parker correctly adds that in Roman sexual ideology “‘active’ is *by definition* male and ‘passive’ is *by definition* female.”²³ For Romans, then, the names given to sexual actors identified their gender status. Hence, the Roman man was, by definition, an “impenetrable penetrator,” an indomitable dominator.²⁴ The *vir* had to be “hard in every sense—physically to be impervious to pain or fatigue, mentally to be stern and unyielding, and of course, inevitably to take the insertive position in sexual congress.”²⁵ So a *vir* could be a *fututor*, *pedicator* or *irrumator* and still be a *vir*/citizen-male. But he could *not* remain a real *vir*/citizen-male and be identified as a *cunnilinctor*, a *cinaedus* or a *fellator*. Since reception was *by definition* womanly, to allow himself to be identified in this way, as receptive or penetrated, was to make himself, to varying degrees, a “not-man.” Whether “active/insertive”

²¹ Parker, “Teratogenic Grid,” 49. The result is a complex grid of sexual practices that Romans identified with a given actor as either “active” (for the *vir*, *fututor* or “vaginal inserter,” *pedicator* or “anal inserter,” *irrumator* or “oral inserter”) or “passive” (for the *pathicus*, *cunnilinctor* or “‘vaginal’ insertee,” *cinaedus/pathicus* or “anal insertee,” *fellator* or “oral insertee”; for the *femina*, *femina/puella* or “vaginal insertee”; *pathica* or “anal insertee,” *fellatrix* or “oral insertee”).

²² Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 15–16.

²³ Parker, “Teratogenic Grid,” 48 (his emphasis). Note in particular the synonymy between *femina* “the subject” and *femina/puella* “the vaginally penetrated” sexual actor.

²⁴ Jonathan Walters, “Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought,” in Hallett and Skinner, *Roman Sexualities*, 29–43.

²⁵ Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 212.

or “passive/receptive,” sex acts in Rome were therefore gender-identifying acts. As we shall see, this was as true of the *tribas* as it was of the *vir*.

The second problem with the use of “sexuality” or its variants is that it leaves intact one foundational structure of sexuality—its presumption of a two-sex human body. Craig Williams argues that the main implication of insights like those of Parker is that Romans describe sexual actors primarily in gendered terms, as “male and female, and each of these has the subgroups *insertive* and *receptive*, with *insertive male* and *receptive female* being the normative types, *receptive male* [*pathicus*] and *insertive female* [*tribas*] being considered deviant.”²⁶ Williams’s description helpfully highlights the gendered identity of sexual actors, but he does not quite see that the *pathicus* and *tribas* were not treated as gender-deviant subgroups of the *two* groups, male and female. Rather, the gender-liminal sexual activities of the *pathicus* and the *tribas* resulted in their ideological alignment with a *third* gender group, that of the androgyne who was neither self-evidently male (insertive) nor female (receptive).²⁷ Williams’s description, like Parker’s grid, still assumes two biological sexes.

Thus, the fundamental issue at stake here is that the two-sex schema of the human body is a modern, Western model maintained by medical, cultural and ideological protocols of body-crafting. As Thomas Laqueur details, before the invention of modern medicine, the human body was defined on a one- sex/body model, where the ideal sex/body was deemed male and actual bodies were gendered as more or less perfect versions of the ideal male body.²⁸ Pre-modern Westerners ranked bodies on a hierarchical gender spectrum of relative physical perfection (masculinity); relegated females, as the most

²⁶ Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 215 (his emphasis).

²⁷ Ibid., 210, quoting David M. Halperin, “Forgetting Foucault: Acts, Identities, and the History of Sexuality,” *Representations* 63 (1998): 93–120: “The catastrophic failure of male self-fashioning which the *kinaidos* represents is so complete that . . . it defines and determines a man’s social identity in its totality, and it generated a recognizable social *type*—namely the . . . phobic stereotype of the *kinaidos*.” The inclusion of the *pathicus* in Parker’s “teratogenic grid” hints in this direction, but Parker does not pursue it (“Teratogenic Grid,” 49).

²⁸ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990). Criticisms of Laqueur are largely misplaced (see the unpublished essay of Yale religious studies graduate student Brent Nongbri, “Self-Mastery When ‘There is No Male and Female’: Paul and the Masculinization of the Gentiles in Galatians,” 8–9 n. 23). Even the strand of Hippocratic medicine that treats women as “wholly other” exhibits the fluidity to which Laqueur points.

imperfect male-bodies, to the bottom of that spectrum; and recognized the existence of “middling” androgynous bodies that possessed masculine and less-perfectly masculine (that is, feminine) physical attributes. Alice Domurat Dreger advances Laqueur’s argument by describing the role of hermaphroditism in the invention and cultural maintenance of the two-sex model.²⁹ Dreger argues that late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century improvements in Western medical technology led to a “virtual explosion of human hermaphroditism” and researchers, working under the impression that non-dually sexed bodies were unnatural, began insisting that most hermaphrodites were “really” male or female underneath their physical “ambiguity.” *In order to keep the two sexes distinct*, they also insisted on tighter “definitions of malehood and femalehood.”³⁰ Ironically, this cultural and ideological practice of binarizing biological sex in effect eliminated non-dually sexed bodies from view in the West: “true” hermaphrodites were largely defined away, covered up with gender-binarized clothes and forced to live in a world with (for example) gender-binarized bathrooms; likewise, parents were pressured into post-natal “corrective” surgery of non-dually sexed infants.³¹

We might add to this discussion the observation of Anne Fausto-Sterling that a great variety of sexed expressions are writ onto the human body—not only the “males” and “females” that medical science and the wider culture have crafted into being, but also the approximately 1.7% of non-dually sexed people that are “hidden” among them. This figure includes not only those people Western medicine labels “true hermaphrodites” but also “genotypically female (XX)” children whose genitalia are virilized at puberty (1.5%) and “genotypically male (XY)” children who appear female or androgynous at birth but at puberty develop testes, a fused scrotum and secondary

For criticisms, see Helen King, *Hippocrates’ Woman: Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1998), 11; and Rebecca Fleming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 120–21.

²⁹ Alice Domurat Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 25–26.

³¹ See Bernice L. Hausman, “Demanding Subjectivities: Transsexualism, Medicine, and the Technologies of Gender,” *JHistS* 3 (1992): 270–302; and Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic, 2000), 78–114.

male sex characteristics.³² In other words, the modern definition of biological sex—as biologically dual, ontologically stable, “male” and “female”—is culturally prescribed and maintained.

However arcane this medical discussion of biological sex may seem, it is directly relevant to our analyses of the Roman figure of the *tribas*. After the publication of Hallett’s article on the denial of “female homoeroticism” in Roman literature, a number of scholars have recognized the physical masculinity (or phallicization) of the *tribas*. But they have uniformly treated it as physically impossible. Hallett repeatedly calls the portrait of the *tribas* as a phallic woman a “denial of biological realism.”³³ As I said before, Brooten makes the impossibility of *tribades*’ possessing penises a major aspect of her thesis. She instead calls *tribades* “culturally masculine.”³⁴ Skinner labels the “creation of such a freak, in defiance of biological and social reality . . . , a reflex of the peculiarly Roman fascination with the phallus.”³⁵ Halperin’s definition of tribadism as “the sexual penetration of women (and men) by other women, by means of either a dildo or a fantastically large clitoris,” likewise emphasizes the fancy involved in imagining women as phallicized sexual penetrators. Commenting on that definition in a review of Brooten’s *Love between Women*, T. Corey Brennan noted that “[t]he latter mode is obviously absurd.”³⁶

The point I am making is *not* that actual phallicization of *tribades* is proven by moderns’ dawning recognition that the two-sex model has erased non-dually sexed bodies from Western cultural awareness. I am suggesting rather that our system of body-naming is irrelevant for understanding that of the Romans and that the cultural hegemony of the two-sex body model has unwittingly led scholars to interpret tribadism in light of modern, Western “truths” about sex: that phallicized-women or androgynes do not exist; that girls cannot grow penises; that there are but two sexes; and that that is one

³² See Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, 51–53, 109; and Gil Herdt, “Mistaken Sex: Culture, Biology, and the Third Sex in New Guinea,” in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (ed. G. Herdt; New York: Zone, 1994), 419–46, esp. 429.

³³ Hallett, “Female Homoeroticism,” 268.

³⁴ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 337.

³⁵ Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 252.

³⁶ T. Corey Brennan, review of B. J. Brooten, *Love between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism*, *BMCR* 97.12.03, citing David M. Halperin, *OCD* s.v. “Homosexuality.”

of the most basic facts of nature. It is but one short step from there to treating sexual gender-deviance as same-sex love. For if there are but two sexes and no such thing as body-morphing, then the phallicization of the *tribas* *must* be a male fantasy (or curse) and a *tribas* who has sex with a woman *must* be manifesting a homoerotic tendency. But, as I will now argue, elite Roman men believed that hermaphrodites existed and that *tribades* had (or had grown) penises. Further, they were deeply concerned that the appearance of *tribades*, depicted as monstrous Greek androgynes, portended the effemination of the indomitable Roman *vir*.

BUILDING EMPIRE: GREEK ANDROGYNY AND THE ROMAN IMPERIAL POLITICS OF MASCULINITY

As Aileen Ajootian and Luc Brisson detail, hermaphrodites were hardly the product of the Roman imagination. Rome rather “inherited” from the Greeks both an appreciation for dimorphic divinities and a disgust for human androgynes as foreign, gender-liminal male-effeminates.³⁷ Indeed, Greek interest in androgyny is clear by the fourth century B.C.E. As early as the poem *On Nature*, Empedocles depicted incipient stages in human development as including fantastic combinations of masculine and feminine body parts. But like Aristophanes’ account in Plato’s *Symposium*, he says these beings, called androgynes (*androgynoi*), had disappeared by his day, having split into the male and female forms observable around them (*Symp.* 189d–90b). As Plato narrates, by Aristophanes’ time *androgynos* was a term of reproach for male-effeminates. Evidence from Eupolis, Herodotus, Aristophanes and Hippocrates suggests that the term referred to cowardly foreigners afflicted by a “female disease” (*thelean nousos*) that caused impotence and that led men to exchange implements of war for “women’s roles, tasks, and dress.”³⁸ Plato went so far as to

³⁷ Aileen Ajootian, “The Only Happy Couple: Hermaphrodites and Gender,” in *Naked Truths* (ed. A. O. Koloski-Ostrow and C. L. Lyons; New York: Routledge, 1997), 220–42; and Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*.

³⁸ See Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 238 n. 28; Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (repr., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 144–45; and Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 61–64. Cf. Herodotus 1.105; 4.67; Hippocrates, *Morb. sacr.* 21; Aristophanes, *Ach.* 88, 844; *Eq.* 958, 1293. Fifth-century B.C.E. playwright Eupolis’s comedy *Atrasteutoi* was also called *Androgynoi*.

say that a man wimpy enough to stop fighting a war should run away and become a woman (*Leg.* 3).³⁹

Despite the negative cast androgyny had, Greek literature of the same period also depicts the dimorphic divinity Hermaphroditus in favorable terms. For instance, in Theophrastus's *Characters* and in the fourth-century B.C.E. Greek narrative setting of Alciphron's *Letters*, garlands or crowns of flowers are set upon h/is head (*Char.* 16; *Ep.* 2.35; 3.37).⁴⁰ Material evidence of dimorphic deities also dotted Attica and Athens by the fourth century B.C.E., including figures called "*hermaphroditos anasyromenos*." As the Greek verb *anasyromai* ("to pull up one's clothes") suggests, these figures "stand frontally, their female breasts clearly defined beneath drapery, or partly revealed. They raise the skirts of their long garments revealing male genitals, the small phallus occasionally erect."⁴¹ By the Hellenistic period, both the cult of Hermaphroditus and sculptures of *hermaphroditos anasyromenos* had reached Italy.⁴²

The sculptural tradition of "revealing the hermaphrodite" also began taking forms distinct from *hermaphroditos anasyromenos*. Especially in Roman copies of Hellenistic originals, figures shifted from classically Greek depictions of boyish hermaphrodites to those characterized by a voluptuous femininity. So-called "Sleeping Hermaphrodite" figures emphasized the feminine curve of the figures' hips, the soft line of their backs and the "voyeuristic experience of approaching a sleeping, vulnerable woman" from behind in order to engender shock in viewers through a distinct kind of exposure: when audiences moved to the front of the sculptures, their erect phalluses proved they were not women.⁴³ Figures of "Hermaphroditus wrestling with Satyrs" used the same convention of movement around the statue to expose women as hermaphrodites fending off satyrs' sexual advances. Finally, in a fascinating inversion of this theme, another group of larger, seated hermaphrodites wrestling aggressively with

³⁹ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 62.

⁴⁰ For information in this paragraph, see Ajootian, "Only Happy Couple," esp. 231, 236 n. 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 220, 223, 227–28. Votive deposits from Mytilene, Lesbos and Paestum (in Sicily) attest to the spread of the cult. For examples of these statues, see *ibid.*, 222–23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 235; cf. 228, 231. Roman copies of the "Sleeping Hermaphrodite" trace back to a Hellenistic original sculpted by the second-century B.C.E. Greek artist Polykles (Pliny, *Nat.* 34.80).

smaller satyrs prominently display erect penises to signal their strength.⁴⁴ In short, despite the effeminacy and foreignness that fourth-century Greek elites associated with human *androgynoi*, they nonetheless popularized the dimorphic divinity Hermaphroditus and established h/is cult throughout Greece, Asia Minor and Italy by the Hellenistic period. Based on their replication of feminine Hermaphroditus sculptures, particularly of the sleeping and powerful-wrestling types, many imperial-era Romans seem to have agreed.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, many Romans also reviled androgynes, as Diodorus Siculus attests (4.6.5–7). Especially from the late third century to the early first century B.C.E., a period of constant war and empire-building, Roman elites redefined the ethnic element of the Greek meaning of the androgyne as a “foreign gender-freak” (*teras*), resignifying it as a *non-Roman* monstrosity of nature—transforming a Greek definition into a means of Roman ethnic self-definition over against the peoples (including Greeks) that the Romans were fighting. Roman elites like Livy viewed androgynes, so defined, as public prodigies (*prodigium publicum*) whose physical monstrosity (*monstrum*) signaled a violation of the *pax deorum* and portended disaster unless they were removed from Roman soil (Livy 1.56.5, 43.13.6; cf. Diodorus 32.12.1).⁴⁶ The fear of ruin that accompanied empire-building seemed to foster paranoia, for Romans saw androgynes everywhere; Livy, Julius Obsequens and Phlegon of Tralles record sightings of no less than sixteen dimorphic prodigies on Roman soil between 209 and 92 B.C.E. alone.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ For images, see Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 232, 234.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 231. Particularly popular among imperial era Romans, the Dresden wrestling group was copied at least twenty-six times in life-sized marble statues, with a Roman or Italian origin for almost all known copies. Similarly, the seated wrestling group boasts at least twelve Roman copies. Images of aggressive(ly female) hermaphrodites advancing on a reclining satyr and a fleeing Pan even appear on Roman gems and Pompeiian walls.

⁴⁶ For the information in this section, see Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 7–40. For example, Livy positions the appearances of androgynes on Roman soil during difficult stretches of the wars with Hannibal (27.11.3–6; in Sinuessa), Hadrubal (27.37.5; Frusino), the Macedonians (31.12.6; Sabina), the Ligurians and Spain (39.22.3–5; Umbria). The narrative setting of 39.22.3–5, moreover, is the institution of the Bacchanalia in Rome, to which Greek actors are brought as a spectacle. Livy says that androgynous monsters (whom he calls “horrible,” “abominable” and “unnatural”), who appear immediately after the Greek actors, “must be removed from Roman soil as speedily as possible and put to death.”

⁴⁷ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 23, 26–27. His list is drawn from Livy and the *Liber prodigiorum* of Julius Obsequens, a fourth-century C.E. writer who epitomizes the prodigies listed by Livy.

The story of Polycritos as related by Phlegon of Tralles⁴⁸ clarifies why Romans saw androgynes as both a physical and a political monster (*teras/monstrum*): h/is dimorphic form (that is, h/is possession of both a penis and vagina) was thought to result from an unnatural mixing of h/is parents' different ethnic "seeds."⁴⁹ In the case of Polycritos's child, these were the Aetolian seed of Polycritos and the Locrian seed of the child's mother. Thus, the presence of androgynes in Rome signaled to Romans that "foreign invaders" were in their land, sowing impure seed among their people. Further, as the monstrous embodiment of ethnic miscegenation, the presence of a foreign androgyne on native soil made it a public prodigy (*teras/prodigium publicum*) that portended ruin (war between the peoples whose ethnic identities were intermingled "unnaturally" in the *teras*) unless interpretation of their appearance, erasure and atonement took place. The state threat posed by foreign androgyny explains why Phlegon depicts Polycritos's child as predicting accurately the future death of Locrians and Aetolians in battle. Such "foreign androgynes" were deemed dangerous omens that had to be expunged.⁵⁰ That is why "in obedience to the Etruscan diviners," "superstitious" Romans ordered the public burning of hermaphrodites living near Rome (Diodorus 32.12.1–2).

As Diodorus's critique of this Roman "superstition" implies, not everyone agreed that "those who display natures of this kind are rarely seen monsters that herald misfortune" for Rome (4.6.5). Diodorus himself gave as a counterpoint to the Republican ideology the rationalist medical argument that androgyny was merely an error of nature (cf. 32.12.1).⁵¹ By the imperial period, Pliny the Elder (23/24–79 c.e.) also insisted that "persons . . . born of both forms combined—what we call 'hermaphrodites,' formerly called 'androgynes' and deemed portents—are now [seen as] entertainments" (*Nat.* 7.36; cf.

⁴⁸ For this account and analysis, see Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 8–23; Proclus (W. Kroll, ed., *In Platonis Rempublicam commentarii* [2 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1899–1901], 2:115, lines 7–15); and Phlegon of Tralles (William Hansen, trans., *Phlegon of Tralles' Book of Marvels* [Exeter Studies in History; Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1996], 28–32).

⁴⁹ As Aristotle noted, "Anyone who does not take after his parents is really a monstrosity, since in these cases nature has strayed from the generic type" (*Gen. an.* 767b).

⁵⁰ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 23, 25, 31; and Ajootian, "Only Happy Couple," 229, 240 n. 38.

⁵¹ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 31.

11.262). As proof, Pliny described hermaphrodites from Argos to Africa without once overreacting and crying “*monstrum!*” In short, the upper-class statesman Pliny insisted that the ideology of foreign androgyny was a superstition that had vanished from imperial Rome.⁵²

I think Pliny doth protest too much, for the evidence suggests that by the imperial period Romans linked androgynes (renamed hermaphrodites) with Hermaphroditus and that many elite Romans held one or more of a few different views of hermaphroditism: approval of the divinity Hermaphroditus; amusement at hermaphrodites; and the treatment of androgyny as an unnatural medical disorder but not as a prodigious foreign *monstrum* portending interethnic war.⁵³

However, Roman treatments of the Cybele cult as a monstrous and effeminating Roman superstition provide critical evidence that the older Republican ideology remained alive in important Roman circles. Brought to Rome from Phrygia in 205 B.C.E. on the belief that doing so would yield a military victory, the Cybele cult gained great popularity, especially among Roman matrons.⁵⁴ Yet the myth of Cybele/Agdistis as a “destructive” hermaphrodite “subdued [only] through castration”⁵⁵ and its memorialization in the castration of male priests, the Galli, discomfited Roman men whose imperial identity was founded on virility. Indeed, castration likely coalesced with vivid religious and cultural images of hermaphroditism to the concern of highly placed Roman men. They banned fellow *virī* from entering the priesthood until the time of Claudius (when Roman copies of the Sleeping Hermaphrodite sculpture began proliferating in Rome, probably in connection with the Cybele cult).⁵⁶ A variety of Roman authors also decried the castration of the Galli, calling them *semimares*, *semivirī* and “*nec virī nec feminae*”; criticizing them for religious insanity; and linking this madness with their foreign origin, the Gallus river in Phrygia.⁵⁷ Juvenal even censured the cult as a

⁵² On “superstition” in this context, see Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 127–35. Pliny implies that it is a foreign “religious” practice based on passion, the disease of fear.

⁵³ I wish to thank Harry Attridge for this formulation.

⁵⁴ Livy 29.10–11, 14; Ovid, *Fast.* 4.179, 291; Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 6.15; Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 10. 1066.

⁵⁵ Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 229; cf. Pausanias, *Descr.* 7.17; Arnobius, *adv. Gentes* 5.7.

⁵⁶ Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 231.

⁵⁷ See Ovid, *Fast.* 4.237, 363; Pliny, *Nat.* 2.261; 5.137; 11.261; 31.9; 35.165; Martial 3.81; 11.74; Catullus, *Carm.* 63.

Greek superstition that spread its androgynous infection to Rome, connecting the castration of the Galli with “monstrous” and effeminating marriages between Roman men (*Sat.* 2.78–170, esp. 117–42; cf. 6.511–21).⁵⁸ Horace (*Ep.* 2.2.208–9) and Persius (*Sat.* 5.186) concurred: the effeminating cult of Cybele/Magna Mater was a *superstitio*. The ideology of androgyny as an effeminating Greek monstrosity—indeed, as a *Roman superstitio*—was thus alive and well in imperial Rome.

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (8 C.E.) reveals the imperial fear at its heart—the enervation of the empire by Greek effeminacy. As the title of his opus indicates, the *Metamorphoses* recount the transformation of humans to other forms, both human and non-human. A retrospective, ideological mythology—it culminates in the apotheosis of Julius Caesar—the *Metamorphoses* include six stories of androgynous body-transformations.⁵⁹ As Brisson summarizes, some of these androgynes represent both body-forms simultaneously (Hermaphroditus), while others embody sequential androgyny (Sithon, Iphis, Mestra, Cainis) or live in flux between male and female forms (Tiresias),⁶⁰ all of which represent ancient types of androgyny.

I focus here on Ovid’s account of Hermaphroditus (4.285–388) not only because he was the first writer to relate the myth but also because he made it a portentous Roman tale of Greek gender-deviance and sexual effeminacy.⁶¹ Located in a two-book account of Theban legends of transformation, Ovid’s story offers a “sinister vision” of Greek dimorphism.⁶² The son of Hermes and Aphrodite, the god-youth Hermaphroditus met a nymph called Salmacis by a spring of the same name. Hermaphroditus was swimming and, in a

⁵⁸ One of the two is depicted as an effeminate bride-man “who is now arraying himself in the flounces and train and veil of a bride” and has forgotten Rome’s warrior-past (who “once carried the nodding shields of Mars . . . Away we thee then; begone from the broad acres of that Martial Plain which thou hast forgotten”).

⁵⁹ Tiresias (Ovid, *Metam.* 3.316–38); Sithon (4.279–80); Hermaphroditus (4.285–388); Mestra (8.843–78); Iphis (9.666–797); and Cainis (12.169–209). See Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 44–45.

⁶⁰ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 45. Book three records the tale of the shape-shifter Tiresias (cf. *ibid.*, 115–45). A blind diviner, Tiresias was known for shape-shifting between female and male forms. Because of his condition, he was thought to understand “female” and “male” realms of experience, particularly sexual experience. This was the basis for his professional role as mediator between the gods.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42; and Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 229.

⁶² Ajootian, “Only Happy Couple,” 229, whose account I paraphrase.

reversal of gender expectations, Salmacis fell passionately in love when she spied him in the water. Overcome with passion, Salmacis dove in and clung to him aggressively while the youth struggled vainly against her advances. But Salmacis, vowing to win him, coiled around him like a serpent and the two became one, “neither woman nor man but both at once.” When Hermaphroditus saw h/is new physical form—a dimorphic “half-man” (*semivir*, *semimarem*, *biformis*) with a phallus but in all other ways effeminate (*mollita*)—he called down upon the spring a divine curse from his parents so that other men would likewise be effeminated (*mollescat*) by its waters.

Hermaphroditus’s reaction to h/is androgyny reveals both the ideological character of Ovid’s account and the conventional assumptions that supported it. As Brisson explains, Ovid’s account is a Roman etiology of sexual effemination. Passages from Strabo and Vitruvius indicate that in Ovid’s time the Salmacis spring (like the Phrygian Gallus) had a reputation for effeminating men and turning them into sexual passives.⁶³ Yet, according to Ovid, the cause of the spring’s reputation for effeminacy was the androgynization of the Greek god Hermaphroditus at the hands of an aggressive nymph. Ovid names effeminacy as the product of Greek androgyny, which was in turn caused by excessive female passion. However, identifying sexual effeminacy as a function of androgyny was hardly his invention.⁶⁴ Ovid rather repeated the conventional association of androgyny with unnatural or unchaste intercourse, linking Hermaphroditus with a notorious Greek locale, thereby effeminating a Greek god/dess popular in Rome. Just as Roman *vir*i identified the Cybele

⁶³ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 49–53; Vitruvius, *Arch.* 2.8.11–12; Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.2.16.

⁶⁴ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 32–37. Diodorus Siculus describes hermaphrodites forced by dimorphism into “unnatural intercourse” with their partners. For example, an Epidaurian wo/man named Callo, who was born a “girl” without a vaginal opening, was obliged to “submit to unnatural embraces” (*τὴν δὲ παραφύσιν ὁμιλίαν ὑπομονεῖν ἀναγκασμένῃ*) because she was incapable “of intercourse as a woman” (i.e., being penetrated; 32.11). Similarly, an oracle warns King Alexander to “beware of the place that bore the two-formed one,” the hermaphroditic “woman” Herais (32.10.2). In keeping with the portrait of androgyny as an ethnic *monstrum*, Diodorus depicts Herais as the child of a Macedonian man and an Arabian woman. Later in life, she became ill, developing a tumor at the base of her vagina that split, revealing “a phallus and testicles.” Diodorus underscores that people who discovered her hermaphroditism assumed that “she had had intercourse with her husband ‘as a man,’ since natural intercourse did not fit their theory [of androgynous sex].”

cult with castrating superstition and the Galli with an effeminating Phrygian river, so too Ovid linked an androgynous Greek god with an effeminating spring in order to identify the Greek divinity Hermaphroditus as a source of effemination for *virī* who unwittingly “imbibed” h/im. This is what makes Ovid’s take on hermaphroditism portentous: it is identified as an androgynizing, Greek infection of Roman men (a *superstitio*). As Diodorus describes, it induced fear in Romans that hermaphrodites “are rarely seen monsters that herald misfortune” for *virī*, potentially resulting in the effemination or elimination of their not so “superfluous flesh.” As Brisson recognizes, even unwitting openness to effete Greek androgyny was an imperial threat: “. . . in contrast to . . . Greece, where passivity was acceptable at a certain stage in a man’s life [as a youth], a Roman citizen had but one aim in life: to conquer the world. Accordingly, he had to learn from his earliest childhood never to accept subjection but always to impose his will, in sexual as well as all other matters.”⁶⁵

This difference between typically Greek and Roman takes on sexual passivity and androgyny explains the imperial threat that Roman women’s activity posed to Roman virility. Romans, like Greeks, typically believed that one’s actions could transform men into women and women to men. But since the imperial Roman citizen-male (*vir*) was *by definition* an impenetrable penetrator, a not-woman, the idea that women could transform themselves into penetrators (*by definition* male) by means of their sexual actions constituted a serious—indeed, an ideologically unnamable—societal threat.

The basis of this threat lies in the Greek medical model of the “one-sex” body inherited by the Romans, which deemed the ideal body manly and ranked actual bodies on a hierarchical gender-spectrum of relative manliness that reflected and sustained societal gender relations.⁶⁶ Medical texts describe the perfect body as masculine—

⁶⁵ Brisson, *Sexual Ambivalence*, 70–71.

⁶⁶ Hence, modern distinctions between biological sex and gender are anachronistic when applied to the ancient world. See Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 29. On the gender-spectrum, see Laqueur, *Making Sex*; Ann Ellis Hanson, “The Medical Writers’ Woman,” in Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 309–38; Anne Carson, “Putting Her in Her Place: Women, Dirt, and Desire,” in Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 135–69; Gleason, “Semiotics of Gender”; Brooten, *Love between Women*, 167 n. 65; and Dale B. Martin, “Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1:18–32,” *BibInt* 3 (1995): 332–55 (193). Cf. Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 728a18–20; 737a25–35; 775a15; Plato, *Tim.* 69c–81e.

hard, rational, physically and politically strong, superior, active, dry and penetrative. Citizen-males were identified with this physical category. Less masculine bodies were ranked lower on the spectrum as differently imperfect versions of the ideal male body. For example, the Hippocratic corpus (*Regimen*) lists three hierarchical ranks of “males” and three ranks of “females” produced from the intermixing of parents’ seeds in the womb.⁶⁷ The three ranks of “men” included true men “brilliant in soul and strong in body”; brave men (*andreioi*) less brilliant in soul; and *androgynoi*, gender-liminal men-women.⁶⁸ To underscore, in this Greek typology *androgynoi* were the lowest form of “man.” In general, “females/women” occupied the bottom rungs of the hierarchy, deemed to be inverted males who were identified socially by their physical imperfections (irrationality, fleshiness, passivity, wetness, porosity). As such they were inherently dangerous to family and state, a leaky entry point for all kinds of social pollution.⁶⁹ The Hippocratic ranking reflects this definitional othering, for the best kind of women ranked lowest on the gender spectrum, the “very female and fair”; “bolder but still modest” women ranked higher on the gender spectrum but lower in esteem; and masculine women (*andreiai*) came last, as the highest “feminine” form on the gender spectrum but the lowest in esteem. Power dynamics are thus integral to this hierarchy: for men, a lower ranking was bad; for women, a higher ranking was bad. The rankings were also asymmetrical: the highest form of “woman” was not the androgyne (the lowest form of “man”) but the *andreia*.⁷⁰ In other words, the androgyne signified the critical point on the hierarchy at which the gender identification of a body changed from “woman” to “man.”

This point is important because people could traverse the gender scale, up or down. As several scholars have shown, neither Greeks nor Romans conceived of gender as a stable characteristic independent

⁶⁷ See Hanson, “Medical Writers’ Woman,” 309–11. Cf. Gleason, “Semiotics of Gender,” 390–92: in terms of their anatomical conceptions, Herophilus, Hippocrates and Galen conceived of women as men with internal genitalia. For Hippocrates and Galen, who thought male and female seed commingled and fought for dominance after sex, this meant that a baby’s gender depended on “which type of seed predominated or the temperature of the uterine quadrant in which it lodged” (391).

⁶⁸ For a detailed description of this typology, see Brooten, *Love between Women*, 158.

⁶⁹ Carson, “Putting Her in Her Place,” 158–59.

⁷⁰ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 158.

of sexuality, but as a spectrum of mutable, binarized acts.⁷¹ Because the human body was thought to contain feminine and masculine elements that needed constant management (i.e., masculinization) through self-mastery (*enkrateia*), gender/body form was not a given but an achieved state. One was *made* a “man” or a “woman” not only by divine intervention or astral alignment but by any of a number of gendered acts: cowardice in a former life; the predomination of one parent’s seed over another’s in the womb; the swaddling of infants; clothing choice; carriage; and overindulgence of passion through sex, gluttony, athleticism, anger or fear.⁷² Hence, ancients thought a man could become more female, mutating into an androgyne, by taking up feminine practices (feminine dress, hairstyles, hair length, cosmetics, receptive intercourse). By habitually penetrating a freeborn boy a man could also cause the boy’s physical effemination. Finally, a woman could become physically androgynous—that is, a *man*—by embracing masculine habits like sexual penetration.⁷³

It is *this* logic of androgynous shape-shifting, this fear of *physical* transformation based on gender-transgressive acts, which structures censures of pederasty and tribadism. As Philo of Alexandria writes,

Men mounted males without respect for the common sex nature which the penetrator [lit. the “active ones”] shares with the penetrated [lit. “the passive”] . . . Then, as little by little they [penetrators] accustomed those [the penetrated] who were by nature males to submit to play the part of women, they *saddled them with the formidable curse of a female disease, not only emasculating their bodies by effeminacy and debauchery but working a further degeneration in their souls* and . . . corrupting the whole of humankind. (*Abr.* 135–36)

⁷¹ John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 50; Hanson, “Medical Writers’ Woman,” 311; and Gleason, “Semiotics of Gender,” 31.

⁷² Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 90e–91d. Also see Gleason, “Semiotics of Gender”; Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Hanson, “Medical Writers’ Woman”; Martin, “Heterosexism and the Interpretation,” 341–46; and Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁷³ Support for this view is found in a Pompeiian graffito describing the prostitute Euplia as “slack (*laxa*) [with] a big clitoris (*landicosa*)” (*CIL* IV 10004). *Laxa* implies that Euplia’s vaginal opening is “gaping wide” from overuse, while the adjectival form of *landica* (the incredibly indecent *vox propria* for the clitoris) implies that her clitoris was overlarge, probably *also* from overuse, and that it gave the prostitute “a masculine or hermaphroditic appearance” (cf. Marguerite Johnson and Terry Ryan, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature: A Sourcebook* [London: Routledge, 2005], 102 n. 3; also see James N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* [Baltimore:

[N]ow [pederasty] is a matter of boasting not only to penetrators but to the passives, *who habituate themselves to endure the disease of effemination . . . and leave no ember of their male nature to smolder*. Mark how conspicuously they braid and adorn the hair of their heads, and how they scrub and paint their faces with cosmetics and pigments and the like, and smother themselves with fragrant unguent . . . in fact *their contrivance to transform, by scrupulous refinement, the male nature to the female does not raise a blush*. These persons are rightly judged worthy of death by those who obey the law, which ordains that *the androgyne who debased the currency of nature should perish unavenged, suffering not to live for a day or even an hour, as a disgrace to himself, his household, his homeland, and the whole human race*. (Spec. 3.37–38)

In Philo's gender-schema, "nature" naturally binarizes the physique into the "male" and "female" poles of the gender-spectrum. But alignment of bodies with these poles is not set by nature. On the contrary, people must work to maintain their gender positions and they can overcome them by means of unnatural, overpassionate acts. The threat that they will do so—clearly an ethnic or "state" threat—applies equally to penetrative-women and passive-men. As Laqueur notes, "The actions of the *mollis* and the *tribade* were . . . unnatural . . . because they played out—literally embodied—radical, culturally unacceptable [gender] reversals of power and prestige."⁷⁴

Here enters the indomitable Roman *vir*. Romans inherited this conception of the human body from Greek doctors and philosophers. Yet, as Walters, Williams and Parker together demonstrate, Romans uniquely marked the body of the Roman *vir* with the anxieties of empire. Romans overtly identified physical inviolability and a *huge* penetrating phallus with Roman male imperial power.⁷⁵ Hence, the *vir* was and had to remain *the* ideological sign of Roman conquerability—the impenetrable penetrator, he who could not be invaded.⁷⁶ This identification of the penetrating phallus with empire

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982], 96–98). Doctors like Soranos also correlated an "immensely great clitoris" (*peri hypermegethous numphēs/de immoderata landica*) with excessive intercourse; because that phallus could be used for sexual penetration, which was a male-only capacity, the doctors treated it as a gender problem requiring clitoridectomy (Brooten, *Love between Women*, 162–71; and Hanson, "Medical Writers' Woman," 333).

⁷⁴ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 53.

⁷⁵ Cf. Williams's following comments: "Athenian men circulated images of smooth, discreet boys as objects of desire . . . [but] Roman men looked to the figure of the well-endowed, hyper-masculine Priapus as a source of identification" (*Roman Homosexuality*, 86).

⁷⁶ Walters, "Invading the Roman Body," 41; and Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 132.

had two main ideological consequences: the unacceptability of androgynous Roman men (*mollis/pathicus*) and the inconceivability of androgynous Roman women (*tribas*). Since the *vir* was by definition penetrative (the *fututor*) and the *femina* was by definition the penetrated (*femina/puella*), the penetrated-*vir* was an oxymoron. As Parker's teratogenic grid suggests, the *vir* or potential *vir* (a freeborn male-youth) subjected to penetration became a not-*vir*, a pathic or androgynous half-man (*mollis*). As h/is absence from Parker's teratogenic grid indicates, however, the penetrative-*femina* was not just an oxymoron, h/e was ideologically *unnamable*. The idea of the penetrative-wo/man—who by the standards of the one-body model climbed the gender hierarchy and made herself a *man*—was so unacceptable to the imperial mind that *it could not even be named as a Roman possibility*.

When we add the increased importance of citizen status to this Roman gender system, the threat represented by sexually active Roman women is vividly realized. As Walters details,

The contours of social status demarcated by the distinction between the sexually penetrable and the impenetrable are, broadly speaking, the same as those we see when we examine the distinction between the beatable and the unbeatable. The pattern that emerges is that of a social pyramid. At the apex are the small class of *virī*, true men, adult Roman citizens in good standing, the impenetrable penetrators. Just below them are sets of people—freeborn male youths and respectable women—who are potentially penetrable because they are not or not yet men, but who are defined (because of their family connections with respectable Roman men) as inviolable, and therefore under the protection of the law. Below them on the lowest slopes of the pyramid are those, whether male or female, who are beatable and sexually penetrable.⁷⁷

The categories of citizen/non-citizen and Roman/foreign thus took on primary weight in the Roman imperial gender hegemony. As a consequence, Roman women were substantially closer in power to Roman men than were their female Greek counterparts and gender-transgression by Roman women, as the “proximate other” of Roman *virī*, was a significantly greater social threat. Likewise, acts of violation/penetration by non-citizens (whether sexual, social or imperial) became more dangerous ideologically, for they signaled the enervation or penetration of the very symbol of empire, the Roman *vir*.

⁷⁷ Walters, “Invading the Roman Body,” 41 (cf. 37).

One significant consequence of this imperial redefinition of gender was the need to control ethnic others, especially the Greeks. Though Greeks were now a conquered people, Romans could “hardly deny that Greek culture was older and richer than their own.”⁷⁸ Romans responded by denouncing Greek culture as “womanly”—debauched and effeminating—and by identifying Roman decadence and gender-deviance as enervating Greek imports. Not only did they align the cults of Hermaphroditus and Cybele/Magna Mater with effete androgyny, they stereotyped Greeks themselves as “long-haired smooth-chinned gown trailers” (Varro, *Sat.* 311). They also identified Greece as the Arcadian source of luxury. They linked Greek accents with indulgence and gave sexually ambiguous accessories Greek-sounding names (e.g., *Graeca mitella*). Romans also used Greek words, often without identifying them as such, to censure unacceptable Roman sexual practices (*paedico* from *pais* [“boy”]; *pathicus* and *cinaedus* from *kinaidos*; *tribas* from the verb *tribein* [“to rub”]). Romans even criticized each other as “little Greeks” for showing too great a love for theater, athletics or philosophy. In short, Romans placed the blame for Roman indulgence of luxuries won through conquest—excess that they thought enervated imperial virility—squarely on Greek shoulders.

Of equal importance was Roman men’s increased concern with the activities of Roman women (cf. Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 10–13). Though by definition the penetrated, mere receptacles for Roman men, matrons were now closest to them in power. As leaky pores of social pollution, matrons were therefore the focus of men’s concerns about personal and societal effemination. And, as I will now argue, Roman *vir*i responded to this threat by stereotyping them too, this time as hypersexual, androgynous *tribades*. It is a commonplace of current research on androgyny that in the imperial period the Roman superstition that androgynes were foreign gender monsters had disappeared. But it did not; Roman men tied it explicitly to the “effeminating” Greek cults of Hermaphroditus (Ovid) and the Great Mother (Juvenal) and, through their foreign infection, to the effemination of the Roman *vir*. Further, by the imperial period, Hellenistic and Roman sculptures

⁷⁸ For the evidence in this paragraph, see Andrew Dalby, *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2000), 243–72, and esp. 118, 121–24, 139 (quote is from 118); cf. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 135–37; and Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 197–200.

of *womanly* Hermaphroditus figures had flooded the empire and Roman matrons enthusiastically supported the hermaphroditic cult of the Roman Cybele/Magna Mater, which was located in the heart of Rome. Responding to such pressures, Roman men refocused the imperial image of monstrous androgyny and its tie to portentous interethnic mixing on a different kind of (now internal) gender monster, constructing politically active Roman matrons as Greek *tribades*.

MATRONS, THE GREEK *TRIBAS* AND THE ROMAN IMPERIAL POLITICS OF MASCULINITY

Roman Matrons in Politics and the Convention of Sexual Gender Deviance

As proposed by Skinner, the link of tribadism to matrons' political activity builds on the generally accepted correlation of the *tribas* with social disquiet between Roman women and men. Richard Bauman,⁷⁹ Skinner and others have noted that by the early imperial period high-status women had made substantial gains in economic and political power and that those shifts attracted the ire (and angst) of Roman men.⁸⁰ J. P. Sullivan postulates that humorists and moralists, chafing at these developments, may have phallicized females who "ape all of a man's sexual and social behaviors to make the point that women were getting out of hand."⁸¹ Skinner extends that hypothesis to encompass the possibility that the "satiric caricature of the tribad became popular at that moment because elite males, including members of the imperial family, had begun to delegate some quasi-public responsibilities to their wives . . . a new category of bad women—the 'illegitimate man,' usurper of phallic privilege—had to be invented."⁸²

⁷⁹ Richard A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁸⁰ Cf. Skinner's following comment: "During the first century C.E., male oversight over women's economic activity lessened, first because of the Julian legislation exempting women who had borne the proper number of children from tutelage and afterward through the emperor Claudius' removal of automatic guardianship by paternal kin in cases of intestacy (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.157, 171). It is likely that affluent women took advantage of their increased financial freedom, a development that might have been perceived as threatening" (*Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 253).

⁸¹ Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 253, citing J. P. Sullivan, *Martial: The Unexpected Classic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 197–207, esp. 205–6.

⁸² Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 253–54. I discovered Skinner's recent proposal in the final stages of writing this essay. I concur with her hypothesis,

Skinner is basically correct. But as the foregoing discussion shows, this threat was more physical and more immediate than Skinner implies. It was more physical because Romans thought active matrons open to gender-deviant “Greek” debauchery *could actually become* male-usurpers of phallic privilege. It is more immediate because politically active matrons were men’s “proximate other,” the closest threat to the power of Roman men. It was also imperialistic because politically active matrons, who had quasi-public political and religious responsibilities and yet (ideologically speaking) remained sieves of societal pollution, were both sexual and imperial entry points for enervating foreign influences.

We must, therefore, cast the correlation between these sexual and imperial threats into stark relief. First, changes in marriage and divorce laws gave affluent Roman women in the imperial era greater economic freedoms over their cohorts in the early Republic, when *manus* marriages did not permit divorce or property rights and husbands could execute them for adultery.⁸³ Ironically, Roman women’s fortunes began to improve with Augustus’s institution of the Julian laws (18–17 B.C.E.), established to reinforce the ancient code of *pudicitia* (chastity) among noble women and to rebuild the Roman nobility after conquest and civil war. These laws (*leges Juliae*) strengthened marriages among elites by encouraging procreation of heirs, restricting inheritance to the married and making adultery a public offence.⁸⁴ The second Julian law restricted men’s ability to punish their wives by regulating who could charge someone with adultery, reducing the severity of punishments and by making husbands subject to the charge of *lenocinium* (“pandering”) if they permitted adultery. While regulation of adultery continued, by the first century C.E. changes to the first *Lex Julia* enabled elite women to divorce more easily and to control

to which I arrived at independently, and I will now make my case for it. However, since her hypothesis does not link the stereotype of politically active matrons as *tribades* with androgyny, imperialism or interethnic politics, her argument in support of that proposal might differ from mine.

⁸³ See Bauman, *Women and Politics*, 11, 16, 25, 35–36. Expected to honor Chastity (*pudicitia*) publicly, patrician women could be prosecuted for systematic prostitution. By 215 B.C.E. the *Lex Oppia* regulated their wealth, the color of their clothes and when and where they could ride in carriages. After the repeal of the *Lex Oppia* (Livy 34.2.2, 6), senators quashed bacchanalian rites because the women-led nocturnal gatherings were said to promote promiscuity and endanger the state. Women’s reputations apparently needed protecting!

⁸⁴ Bauman, *Women and Politics*, 105.

their own property.⁸⁵ Wealthy women's increased economic freedom unquestionably caused anxiety to Roman men who feared the socio-economic and gender challenges it posed. As Martial wrote, "You all ask why I don't want to marry a rich wife? I don't want to be my wife's wife. The matron . . . should be below her husband. That's the only way man and woman can be equal" (8.12).⁸⁶

Martial's quip points to an important ideological link between women's increased autonomy under the Roman Empire and men's fear of personal emasculation: a matron's activity not only masculinized them, it effeminized their male relations, making them wives to their wives. This insight is also crucial for understanding reactions of *viri* to the increasing political influence of imperial era matrons. As Bauman writes, "by the mid-first century (B.C.E.) some great republican matrons had come to exert so much indirect influence [on government] that it virtually became a form of direct control."⁸⁷ Most noteworthy in this context, in the religious arena Roman matrons not only participated in the gender-bending Bona Dea rituals, but helped to found the Roman Cybele/Magna Mater cult. The matron Claudia Quinta was credited with establishing this cult on the Palatine and becoming the first Roman priestess of the Magna Mater (Ovid, *Fasti* 4.291; Propertius 4.11.52); many matrons followed her lead. Livia even portrayed herself as Cybele on a cameo, a trend-setting move imitated by several leading ladies, including Julia Domna, second wife of Septimus Severus, who conjoined her image with Cybele's on coins. Thus, Roman matrons increasing their political clout also embraced the religious power of the Great Mother—even as S/he "threatened" Roman men with castration.

Not surprisingly, Roman men answered these political activities with charges of imperialistic gender-deviance. Just as Martial derided the masculinity of the wealthy matron, so also Tacitus worried about

⁸⁵ Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 253.

⁸⁶ Cf. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking*, 228–29.

⁸⁷ Bauman, *Women and Politics*, 4. Great matrons from Cornelia to Agrippina influenced imperial succession, sought a share in power and gained status in the process. For instance, Cornelia engineered Scipio Aemilianus's death to ensure her son Tiberius's success in governance (*ibid.*, 43; cf. Valerius Maximus 3.8.6). Matrons' inroads into politics became even more direct under the Principate, when imperial women in the *Domus Caesarum* fought to assure the succession of the imperial line and pressed for partnership in power. Livia, the mother of the Emperor Tiberius, advised Augustus and pushed him to institute the *leges Juliae*. Some called her *mater patriae* ("mother of the country") and others, *Romana Princeps*, a title elevating her to the level of Augustus (*ibid.*, 12, 125, 128). In defense of the rights of the Julian

impotentia muliebris in the Principate (*Ann.* 1.4.5; 4.57.4; 12.57.5) and Livy opined that feminine imperiousness (*impotentia muliebris*) and lack of self-control would destroy Roman freedom (34.2.2, 6). Plutarch likewise suggested that the great Fulvia wanted only “to rule a ruler and command a commander” (*Ant.* 10.3) and Narcissus charged Agrippina with “feminine imperiousness”.⁸⁸ Significantly, Roman men deployed sexual charges like adultery as their most poignant proofs of politically active women’s gender-crimes.⁸⁹ Julia, Livia, Messalina, Agrippina and Poppea Sabina were all labeled adulterers who contravened the *lex Julia*.⁹⁰ Tacitus deemed Messalina a “savage whore” who threw the whole society into chaos and he called Agrippina’s power-grabbing unchastity an “almost masculine subjection” (*quasi virile servitium*; *Ann.* 12.7.5–6). Livia and Messalina were even charged with *lenocinium*, intimating that they acted as husbands facilitating the adultery of others.⁹¹ Finally, Juvenal blamed masculinized matrons, whom he called “monsters of wickedness,” for the debauched spectacle of plebian Galli parading their superstition through Roman streets (6.511–21, 644–45). In other words, Roman women’s political and religious activities had become a cipher for anxieties of empire.⁹² Roman men, afraid of political usurpation and physical effemination through foreign influence, leveled charges of gender-deviance and adultery against them.

*Enter Martial: The Tribas as Greek He-Woman and
Threat to Matronly Chastity*

The above argued point is crucial if we are to understand the imperial character of the *tribas*, for the figure of the *tribas*, like that of the matron, was charged with sexual aggression, adultery and imperialistic

family against the Claudians, the elder Agrippina established a political organization (*Partes Agrippinae*) to destabilize Tiberius’s regime (*ibid.*, 217). Messalina, wife of Claudius, had her enemies banished and convinced the Senate to give her the title “Augusta.” The younger Agrippina dominated the politics of her time so thoroughly that she convinced Claudius to adopt her son Nero; murdered Claudius to enthrone Nero; had political opponents banished or killed; pushed Nero for public recognition and a role in imperial governance; and had her visage stamped on coins.

⁸⁸ Bauman, *Women and Politics*, 184.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹⁰ Sandra R. Joshel, “Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire: Tacitus’s Messalina,” in Hallett and Skinner, *Roman Sexualities*, 221–54.

⁹¹ Bauman, *Women and Politics*, 125, 158.

⁹² Joshel, “Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire,” 242, 247.

masculinity (in the form of “penetrative” Greek androgyny). Roman caricatures of the figure even invoke “matronly unchastity” to underscore the politically destabilizing effects of women’s androgynization. As Martial says, “I never saw you close to men, Bassa, and no rumor gave you a lover. You were always surrounded by a crowd of your own kind, performing every office, without a man coming near you. So I confess I thought you were a Lucretia. But Bassa, o evil deed, you were a fucker! You dare to join cunts and your monstrous ‘penis’ counterfeits a man. You have invented a portent worthy of the Theban enigma: ‘where no man is, there is adultery’” (1.90, LCL modified). From the outset Martial contrasts the figure of Bassa with the unimpeachable chastity of the matron Lucretia. But Martial casts Bassa as a gender-fraud, a *faux*-matron whose seeming morality is a ruse for adultery. For though she at first appears to be a woman, Bassa reveals by her actions that she is a “counterfeit male” and a *fututor*, a hermaphroditic gender-monster who both has a “cunt” and can penetrate one with h/er huge “penis” (*uenus*). The term *uenus*, often translated “clitoris” in 1.90, is physically ambivalent here; elsewhere it is a synonym for *mentula* (Martial 1.46.2; 3.75.6; Juvenal 11.167; Lucretius 4.1270). When accompanied by the other masculine physical language in 1.90, Martial’s use of the phrase “monstrous *uenus*” implies that Bassa has a highly unfeminine phallus; s/he is represented as hermaphroditic.

Having described Bassa’s physical monstrosity, Martial then delivers his point about h/er *impudicitia*: “you’ve invented a portent worthy of the Theban riddle: ‘where no man is, there is adultery.’” By the standard of the *lex Julia*, adultery was the signal threat noble women posed to Roman morality and societal stability. By leveling the charge of adulterer at Bassa, Martial vividly displays to other Roman men the untrustworthiness of Roman matrons’ virtue: They could be doing *anything* behind closed doors. But another question is hanging in the air: What lies beneath matrons’ stolae? Perhaps some matrons are not women at all, but fornicating *faux*-men. Martial pairs the physical description of Bassa with three allusions to the Roman tradition that androgynes were Greek portents (*prodigiosa*, *monstrum* and the Ovidian association of Thebes with Tiresias and Hermaphroditus)⁹³ in order

⁹³ Cf. Brooten, *Love between Women*, 314–17. Hallett calls attention to the parallels between Martial and Ovid’s narrative about Iphis and Ianthe, but she does not connect it with an imperial ideology of androgyny (“Female Homoeroticism,” 263).

to portray androgyny as the solution to a Greek riddle of adultery without *vir*. Further, by describing that charge as a Greek portent, Martial not only reflects Roman men's fear of matrons' hidden adultery but he also reinforces its most humiliating political implication: that Greeks would recognize the monstrous androgyny of Roman faux-matrons better than Roman men.

The imperial politics of gender are implicit in this epigram, but other Latin texts more overtly connect the gender-liminality of the *tribas* with adultery and interethnic politics. In epigram 7 (67, 70), for instance, Martial portrays tribadism as Greek gender-liminality that penetrated and perverted Roman women. Martial makes this point by deploying the Greek word *tribas* twice up front so as to emphasize that it is the *Greek* Philaenis who, as "the ultimate *tribas*," rightly calls the girl she screws her *amicam*: "*Tribas* of the very *tribades*, Philaenis, rightly do you call the girl you screw your *amicam*" (7.70; *Ipsarum tribadum tribas, Philaeni recte, quam futuis, vocas amicom*). Martial's pun on the two meanings of *amica*, "mistress" and "female friend," indicates that the *tribas* actively "screws" or penetrates (*futuis*) a woman as a *vir* would. The *tribas* is gender-deviant. But the epigram's linguistic multivalence and interplay between Greek (*tribas*) and Latin (*amicom*) sexual terminology also implies that Philaenis is a *Roman* woman's illicit *Greek* lover. This ethnic identification is reinforced if, as Bernadette Brooten suggests, Martial's "Philaenis" evokes the eponymous figure of Philaenis known as early as the third century B.C.E. as a Greek courtesan (*hetaira*) and writer of a book of advice on intercourse with men.⁹⁴

This developing picture is reinforced if we dovetail into this depiction the account in epigram 7.67, which portrays Philaenis as a

⁹⁴ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 42 n. 58, 55 n. 119; cf. Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 172; Johnson and Ryan, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature*, 178–79; and Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 271 n. 14. Skinner notes that the author of the sex manual was actually Polycrates of Athens. Athenaeus, who connects Philaenis with the tradition of sex-manuals (220e–f), cites an epigram in which Philaenis denies authorship (335b–c). Athenaeus attributes it to the fourth-century B.C.E. iambic poet Aeschryon of Samos (Johnson and Ryan, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature*, 179). The manual, which gave courtship advice and explained coitus in male-female relationships, was attributed pseudonymously to a courtesan to "lend [it] more weight" (Holt N. Parker, "Love's Body Anatomized: The Ancient Erotic Handbooks and the Rhetoric of Sexuality," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* [ed. A. Richlin; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992], 90–111; and Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 172).

hyper-passionate gender-monster engaged in Greek athletic and sexual games:

Tribas Philaenis buggers boys, and fierce with a husband's erection, penetrates eleven girls a day. She also plays with the harpastum high-girt, gets yellow with sand, and with effortless arm rotates weights that would tax an athlete. Muddy from the crumbly wrestling floor, she takes a beating from the blows of an oiled trainer. She does not dine or lie down for dinner before she has vomited six pints of neat wine, to which she thinks she can decently return when she has eaten sixteen collops. When after all this she gets down to sex, she does not fellate men (she thinks it not virile enough), but rather devours girls' middles. May the god give you your present mind, Philaenis, who think it virile to lick a cunt!⁹⁵

In addition to the term *tribas*, Martial uses several Greek loanwords (*harpastum*, *haphe*, *halter*, *palaestra* and *coloephia*) to hellenize his acquaintance.⁹⁶ He also depicts Philaenis as hyper-manly, not only by means of the *tribas*'s pederastic penetration of (differently gendered) sexual targets, but also through allusions to wrestling, handball, weight-lifting and boxing.⁹⁷ But the key to this epigram is the correlation of these hellenizing and masculinizing tropes with allusions to Philaenis's luxury of body and mind. As I said earlier, Greek and Roman gender ideologies assumed the philosophic notion that the management of passion through self-control (*enkrateia*) is masculin(e)izing and that luxury (*luxuria*) or overindulgence of passion (*voluptas*)—whether of food, drink or sex—effeminates the body and mind of the indulger.⁹⁸ By portraying Philaenis as enjoying *all three* too much, Martial demonstrates Philaenis's extreme luxury and lack of self-control.⁹⁹ This seemingly paradoxical display of Philaenis's effeminacy through hyper-manly pursuits is the rhetorical set up for the punned punch line of this epigram: "May the god give you your present mind (*mentem/mentula*), Philaenis, who think it virile to lick a cunt!"¹⁰⁰ This quintessentially

⁹⁵ Cf. Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 262.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 47–48.

⁹⁸ Martin, "Heterosexism and the Interpretation," 341–46; and Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*. The correlation between overindulgence of sex and effeminacy explains why womanizers were often derided as *cinaedi* (Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 19; and Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 203–9).

⁹⁹ Classical Athenians treated "drinking neat wine" as a Thracian and Macedonian practice that led to insanity and fighting (Dalby, *Empire of Pleasures*, 158). This stereotype was taken up by Horace in *Odes* 1.27.1–2; 2.7.26–28; 2.16.5. Martial repeats it.

¹⁰⁰ On the pun between "mind" (*mentem*) and "male organ" (*mentula*), see Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 262.

Greek male-dominator loves cunnilingus. As Parker and Skinner detail, charging a man with loving cunnilingus was the ultimate Roman insult; a *vir* should always prefer penile penetration (or even fellatio) to servicing a woman.¹⁰¹ For cunnilingus made a man's mouth a "cunt" and the man so passive that, in effect, he was "fucked by a woman" (cf. Martial 11.47, 61). By emphasizing that Philaenis engages in both penetrative *and* receptive sexual acts, Martial's punch line effeminates Philaenis, body and mind, rendering this individual gender-liminal on a Roman scale of masculinity. The Greek Philaenis is not a real "man", however much the *tribas*'s actions imply that h/e is.¹⁰² Philaenis is rather a demented gender-monster and the "Greek way" is the way of lust-based gender-instability. Read in light of this point, Martial's characterization of Philaenis in 7.70 not only highlights the illicit nature of the Greek's intercourse with h/is Roman *amicam*, it also signals the eastern gender instability simultaneously penetrating Philaenis's female friend. Through the intercourse of Philaenis and h/is *amica*, Martial portrays the East as adulterating Roman women with its monstrous Hellenic lust.

Linked thematically with 7.70 through the synonyms *amatrix/amica*, epigram 7.69 increases the viability of this interethnic reading of the *tribas*:

Canius, this is your promised bride, Theophila, whose mind is steeped in Cecropian riches. The Attic garden of the great ancient [Epicurus] could rightfully claim her, nor less would the Stoic throng wish her theirs. Whatever work you send forth through her ears will live; so unwomanlike is her taste, so uncommon. Your Pantaenis would scarcely claim to be her superior, well-known though she be to the Pierian choir. Sappho would love her and praise her verse-making. Theophila is more pure and Sappho was not more accomplished. (LCL modified)

¹⁰¹ Parker, "Teratogenic Grid," 51–52; Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 18–19. Parker states that "for a man to commit cunnilingus is to be fucked by a woman" because cunnilingus is the only sexual act in which a Roman man can be receptive to a woman. Fellatio and cunnilingus are both disgraceful because they make the *vir* orally passive. It was usually equally problematic to perform fellatio (to be orally receptive to a man) as to perform cunnilingus (to be orally receptive to a woman); the denunciation was gender-blind as to the sexual object. But in some cases, such as epigrams 7.67 and 11.61, misogyny tips the scale, making the cunnilinctor the *most passive* of the passives (as Martial phrases it in 11.61, who would want to be a man *so passive* that he would make his mouth a cunt for a cunt?).

¹⁰² Cf. Johnson and Ryan, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature*, 132. They describe Philaenis as "a bisexual freak of nature in the eyes of the poet in that she assumes a male role in her penetration of both boys and girls, while displaying a passive predilection for performing cunnilingus."

In 7.69, Martial portrays Theophila, the “god-loving” intellectual and fiancée of the Roman Canius, as even more Atticized than Epicurus and the Stoics, even more unwomanlike in her tastes than the poets Sappho and Panaetis. The epigram can be read as a strident attempt to defend Theophila’s chastity, given her intellectualism: Theophila, says Martial, is “more pure (*castior*) and more accomplished” than even the great poet Sappho.¹⁰³ But the whole is highly ironic, employing innuendo about Hellenic luxury to call Theophila’s chastity into question. Martial begins this assault with the assertion that Theophila’s “mind is steeped in Athenian riches” (*cuius Cecropia pectora dote madent*). Indeed, Theophila is so desirous of Greek ways that the philosophers Epicurus and the Stoics would welcome her into their circles. We could read this as a compliment of her “masculine mind” (*madent . . . non femineum*), but by pairing Epicurus and the Stoics Martial implicitly invokes well-known stereotypes of these philosophers—stereotypes he himself uses elsewhere—as gluttons and sexual deviants.¹⁰⁴ In so doing he implies that like them Theophila is a luxuriant fool willing to put into practice whatever Greek idea she hears (*vivet opus quocumque per has emiseris aures*), however unwomanlike (*non femineum*) or unRoman (*nec popolare*) it may be. The two adjectives *femineus* and *populare* have dual but divergent meanings; *femineus* means “womanly” or “effeminate” and *populare*, “vulgar” or “indigenous.” Lest Martial’s audience miss his ironic point about the Hellenic threat embodied by Theophila as a potential Roman wife, he deploys these words to portray her sexual and poetic tastes as “masculine” and “foreign.” In other words, she is even more sapphic than Sappho.

Sappho, Martial says, could have been her lover (*amatrix*) and Panaetis, a poet of Sappho’s circle, was hardly her superior. “*In what?*” is the question. Reading for double meaning and innuendo, I would argue that Martial again derides the Hellenes by alluding to the Roman practice of conflating and masculinizing Sappho’s

¹⁰³ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ See Alciphron, *Ep.* 3.19.1–9. Cf. Richlin, “Not Before Homosexuality,” 523–73, esp. 544; F. D. Caizzi, “The Porch and the Garden: Early Hellenistic Images of the Philosophical Life,” in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World* (ed. A. W. Bulloch et al.; HCS 12; Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 303–29; Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 250; and Diana M. Swancutt, “Sexy Stoics and the Rereading of Romans 1.18–2.16,” in *A Feminist Companion to Paul* (ed. A.-J. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; FCNTECW 6; New York: T&T Clark International and Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004), 42–73, esp. 42.

professional and sexual exploits. As Brooten delineates, the great Lesbian poet Sappho—called the “Tenth Muse” by Plato and the “The Poetess” by Galen—was the brunt of many Roman jokes for her sexual pursuit not only of men but also of girls and women in her poetic circle.¹⁰⁵ Reflecting on her exploits, the Latin poets Horace and Ovid took pains to conflate Sappho’s poetic artistry and her amours, characterizing them together as masculine.¹⁰⁶ Read in this vein, conflating Theophila’s implied sexual excess with her Greek “philosophy,” Canius’s bride is not “more pure and more accomplished than Sappho,” but more purely of Sappho’s tastes. She is a hellenized, masculine intellectual schooled in Sapphic licentiousness—not at all a good bride for poor Canius.

Pausing to characterize this rhetoric about the *tribas* in Martial, we find three typical themes (hermaphroditism, the question of matronly chastity, hiddenness of the *tribas*) and one consistent emphasis (anti-Hellenism) across the epigrams. First, *tribades* are portrayed as hermaphroditic rather than homoerotic, as physical and social gender-monsters whose erotic encounters align with either the socially appropriate notion (if one is a Roman man) that one may engage in liaisons with girls or boys or with the socially unacceptable notions (if one is a Roman man) that one may adulterate a matron’s chastity or have excessive, overpassionate sex. The focus here is on the gender problem of *tribades*’ sexual activity based on a Roman standard for appropriate male conduct. Put another way, the gender trouble with the *tribas* is not that she is a *homoerotic* woman, or even a *woman* who commits sexually deviant sex acts, but that h/e’s penetrating others, a viril(izing) act, while not being a *vir*.¹⁰⁷ In short, Martial reviles the possibility that some matrons are neither women nor men but androgynous gender monsters.

¹⁰⁵ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 29–41, esp. 39.

¹⁰⁶ Horace, *Carm.* 4.9.10; *Ep.* 1.19.28; Ovid, *Trist.* 2.365; *Her.* 15; cf. Brooten, *Love between Women*, 34–36; Pamela Gordon, “The Lover’s Voice in *Heroides* 15: Or, Why is Sappho a Man?,” in Hallett and Skinner, *Roman Sexualities*, 274–91. In an anti-imperialistic twist, Catullus even used Sappho’s reputation as a Greek *domina* as a cipher for Clodia Metelli, “conflat[ing] her sexual hunger [for men of power] with the relentless progress of Roman imperial expansionism” (Skinner, *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 218–21).

¹⁰⁷ One will recall that Martial portrays Bassa as possessing *both* masculine and feminine physical attributes; likewise, the main point of epigram 7.67 is that a figure commonly assumed to be masculine is *simultaneously* the supreme “not-man,” a cunnilinctor.

Two other common features of these portraits are the hiddenness of *tribades* among Roman matrons and the potential threat of adultery that such hiddenness raises. We saw earlier that the trope of the “hidden androgyne revealed” was a longstanding sculptural convention popular in imperial Rome. Martial rhetorically depicts that hiddenness, together with the threat of adultery it poses, in his shock that Bassa appears to be a chaste matron but turns out to be a pseudo-male able to adulterate Roman matrons because of h/is proximity to them. But through the use of irony, double entendre and implicit allusion to Greek decadence, Martial also displays these themes rhetorically and far more subtly in his attempt to question Theophila’s chastity and suitability as a Roman bride (7.69). Finally, the rhetorical techniques of hellenization and masculinization do not seem to serve the purpose of denying the existence of tribadism in Rome (Martial speaks in the present tense as if he knows Bassa, Philaenis and especially Theophila). Rather, these epigrams uniformly depict tribadism as Greek androgyny that is currently penetrating and perverting Roman women (Philaenis) or that has masculinized them to the extent that they may now do likewise (Bassa). In short, it appears that the rhetoric about the *tribas* depicts a perceived threat that Roman men thought might occur if they did not keep vigilant watch over matrons’ behavior: Roman women’s physical masculinization and the penetration and effemination of the empire, both a result of Greek luxury and androgyny.

The Greek Origin of the Tribas and the Decline of Empire

Elite Latin writers pointed to the Greek East not merely as the carrier but as the origin of this threat.¹⁰⁸ In *Liber Fabularum* 4.16, the poet Phaedrus (first century C.E.) depicts the origin of *tribades*’ phallicization as a gaff by the Greek mythical figure Prometheus. Emphasizing Prometheus’s connection to a vanquished and debauched Greece (“That same Prometheus, the creator of the pottery race that is broken as soon as it comes up against its fate”),¹⁰⁹ Phaedrus recounts his creation of the gender-liminal bodies of *tribades* and *molles mares*. Having toiled during the day over the creation of female and male genitalia (*naturae partes*), Prometheus becomes intoxicated at a fabulous

¹⁰⁸ Hallett, “Female Homoeroticism,” 256.

¹⁰⁹ Translation taken from Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 211.

dinner party and, after returning from the bash, placed penises on female bodies. Phaedrus's imperial etiology (*aition*) of tribadism could not be clearer: it is Greek androgyny expressed in Phaedrus's own day (*nunc*) through "lust now enjoying depraved pleasure" (*ita nunc libido pravo fruitur gaudio*).¹¹⁰

By examining the work of two relatively contemporary Latin authors, Ovid and Seneca the Younger, we may be able to piece together moments in the ideological formation of this etiology of tribadism and its association with the moral decline of the Roman Empire.¹¹¹ In the heady days of Roman self-indulgence brought on by imperial expansion and the influx of foreign luxuries, Ovid (43 B.C.E.–18 C.E.) reworked these themes within a narrative of androgynous body-change explicitly censured as a "prodigious" (*prodigiosa*) "Cretan monstrosity" (*monstrum*). One of two accounts of androgynous transformations involving maidens changed into men,¹¹² *Metamorphoses* 9.666–797 depicts the physical transformation required by the blossoming love between two Cretan virgins, Iphis and Ianthe. The Egyptian goddess Isis ultimately changes Iphis to a boy so that they can marry.

This story reads, at first, as the narrative regarding the unacceptable love between persons of the same sex. Ovid says that the two maidens cannot love each other because in nature "cows do not

¹¹⁰ On Phaedrus's aetiology of the female tongue as stemming from "the molding of the male organ," see Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 256.

¹¹¹ Two hundred years earlier one can find similar themes operative in the work of Plautus (ca. 250–184 B.C.E.). For example, his raucous slapstick comedy *Truculentus*, funded by the government and performed at Roman festivals, depicts a reversal of rules for hierarchy and decorum between an Athenian slave-girl, Astaphium, and her mistress, the Athenian courtesan Phronesium (see further Saara Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome* [Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 74; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983], 28, 32; and Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 258). The comic foci of *Truculentus* are twofold and complementary: the specter of sex-gone-wild in the context of high-class prostitution and a reversal of social position and sexual role between the slave-girl Astaphium and two others, the sexually experienced courtesan Phronesium and a male rustic. In short, Plautus's Astaphium was gender-deviant as well as oversexed and socially transgressive; in Greece, it seems, everything was upside down. This point leads to another: Plautus cast his state-sponsored spectacle of sexual chaos as a folly Romans could laugh at precisely because it was Athenian. As early as the second decade of the second century B.C.E., Latin writers amused Roman audiences with tales of Athenian women's status-inversion and hyper-masculine sexual aggression.

¹¹² For the other, see the account related to Caenis/Caeneus in Ovid, *Metam.* 12.169–209; and Vergil, *Aen.* 6.448.

love cows, nor mares, mares, but the ram desires the sheep and his own doe follows the stag. So the birds mate, and in the whole animal world, there is no female who loves female" (9.731–34). An explanation of the problem with female homoeroticism even seems to be provided—the “love” is unnatural:

Nevertheless that Crete might produce all monstrous things, the daughter of the Sun loved a bull—a female to be sure, and male . . .—Yet she had some hope of her love’s fulfillment (*tamen illa secuta est spem Veneris*) . . . It is hope of fulfillment that begets love and hope that keeps it alive. And of this hope the nature of things deprives you (Iphis). No guardian keeps you from her dear embrace, no watchfulness of a jealous husband, no cruel father; nor does she herself deny your suit. And yet you cannot have her, nor can you be happy, though gods and men should work for you. (9.736–59)

Yet, while this story does focus on the protagonists’ gender, two elements suggest that its subject is not homoeroticism but, as the title of Ovid’s work and the Roman ideology of androgyny suggests, the body form of a subject that made certain sexual acts conceivable. In the first place, Ovid depicts the problem as the physical impossibility of Iphis consummating the “love of a maid.” What makes Iphis’s “love” for fellow-maiden Ianthe impossible is her lack of a phallus not her homoerotic feelings or her parents’ stance toward the union (Ovid emphasizes the gods’ approval and her parents’ sympathy for them). That it does not seem to occur to Ovid that Iphis might “love” Ianthe sexually in ways that do not require a phallus reflects the vast difference between our sexed, object-oriented construction of homosexuality and the Romans’ focus on the penetrator-penetrated gender binary. In short, “love” does not refer here to an orientational desire but to a particular act, penetration, that requires a “male”—a penetrator. What is Ovid’s proof? The “monstrous” pairing between the Sun-god’s daughter and a bull: “She [Phasiphae, who mated with a bull] at least had some hope of love’s fulfillment [lit. Venus; *tamen illa secuta est spem Veneris*]” (9.735–40). As the pun on *Venus/uenus* suggests, one of the participants had to have a penis. “It is hope of fulfillment that begets love, and hope that keeps it alive. And of this hope the nature of things deprives you” (*ama quod femina debes! Spes est, quae capiat, spes est, quae pascit amorem. Hanc tibi res adimit*). Because as a “woman” Iphis naturally lacks the capacity to “love”—to penetrate—she must “love as a woman [passively]” rather than hope she will gain the phallus necessary to consummate her suit. “Nature,” Ovid says, “will not have it so” (*non vult natura*).

But Ovid twists his own narrative emphasis on nature in such a way so as to explain both the origin of Iphis's problem and the manner of its resolution: nature can be conquered. You see, Iphis was *already* a gender-liminal figure. She is not simply a "male imposter."¹¹³ She has rather been masculinized from birth. Her father wished for a boy and her mother, Telethusa, after pleading with him (ineffectually) not to do so, then fashioned Iphis as a boy to please him. That deceit was formative for, though not transformative of, Iphis's gender. Iphis was dressed as a boy, schooled as a boy, given a boy's name by her father—the gender-neutral name of her paternal grandfather—and, thirteen years later, promised to Ianthe as a boy, again by her father (9.680–85, 705–14). If we take seriously Ovid's argument that the "hope of fulfillment begets love," then her masculine hope of penetration was engendered by her father's hope to have a boy and Iphis's mother's deceitful actions in raising Iphis as a male. The origin of Iphis's desire for Ianthe was therefore the Cretan family's deceitful crafting of Iphis as a gender-*monstrum* (9.666–68, 735–36).

Logically, the ultimate solution to Iphis's gender trouble was physical transformation that conquered her feminine nature (*femina*; 9.730, 748). Ovid provides for this in the form of divine intervention by the Egyptian goddess Isis. The narrative set-up to this intervention is Isis's previous appearance to Telethusa in a dream, before Iphis's birth, in which she encouraged Telethusa to deceive her "blameless" husband and promised to help her (9.696–701). Isis came through when Iphis's dilemma came to a head, transforming Iphis physically into a boy—with a longer stride, darker hue, greater strength, sharper features, shorter locks and (ironically) a *completely unmentioned* penis (9.786–96). Isis returned to a natural state that which Iphis's family had made unnatural, allowing Iphis to "love" as a man.

Ovid's account is thus a Roman morality tale about the specter of unnatural, foreign gender-inversions. Ovid's narrative is set in a Greek land in the remote past and he takes pains to identify that foreign land, Crete, as the "source of all monstrosities" (*omnia Crete monstra ferat*; 9.736), including this one, which is a "prodigy" (*prodigiosa*) of which "no one has ever heard" (9.666–68, 727, 731). He also identifies the story and its characters with that foreign place: the father Ligdus is a freeborn man, but of humble parentage and means (9.670); Telethusa is a Cretan woman and worshipper of Isis,

¹¹³ Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 260.

who is herself richly described as Egyptian (9.696–703); and Ianthe is the daughter of the Cretan Telestes and “renowned among Phaestian women” (9.714–15). As with other Roman imperial stories of androgyny, Ovid’s narrative of Iphis and Ianthe is emphatically about *ethnic difference*. And in this case that difference engenders—at the hands of two female characters, the Cretan Telethusa and the Egyptian goddess Isis—a “thing unheard of” in nature (9.731), the desire of a maid to penetrate another maid and the consequent necessary body-change of maiden to man. The irony of this portrait of Cretan androgyny is, of course, that the “unheard of” *monstrum* was *at that very time* being popularized in elite Roman imperial ideology as the portentous alignment of “the foreign” with unnatural gender instability and sexual deviance.

Writing around the middle of the first century C.E., Phaedrus’s near contemporary Seneca the Younger looked back on the period in the late Republic and early Empire—again, a period of Roman indulgence of foreign riches gained through imperial conquest—and turned this censure of gender monstrosity *inward*. Decrying the physical degeneration and transformation of Roman women into men, he depicts that monstrosity as a function of Roman ethnic decline, which itself results from the influence of foreign luxury (*luxuria*). In the golden age of Rome, Seneca opined, Roman men and women were strong and healthy, having toughened their bodies in agricultural labor and having eaten the fruit of that toil (*Ep.* 95.18).¹¹⁴ But conquest and the unnatural and gluttonous embrace of foreign “riches” of different “types” (*genus*) sickened the Romans (95.19).¹¹⁵

The key proof of this unnatural interethnic upset is the physical masculinization plaguing Roman women who have conquered their

¹¹⁴ For the ideological attachment of Roman identity to the land, see Dalby, *Empire of Pleasures*, 21–24.

¹¹⁵ The pun on ethnic difference marked by *genus* points us to Seneca’s concern: intestinal upset caused by unnatural intermixing. Cf. the following remarks by Seneca: “Mark the number of things—all to pass down a single throat—that luxury mixes together, after ravaging land and sea (*Vide, quantum rerum per unam gulam transiturarum permisceat luxuria, terrarum marisque vastatrix*). So many different dishes must surely disagree; they are bolted with difficulty and digested with difficulty, each jostling against the other. And no wonder, that diseases that result from ill-assorted food are variable and manifold. There must be an overflow when so many unnatural combinations are jumbled together (*et illa ex contrariis naturae partibus in eundem compulsa redundant*). Hence there are as many types of being ill as there are of living (*Inde tam multo aegrotamus genere quam vivimus*)” (*Ep.* 95.19). As Dalby details, Romans treated rich foods and randy love as primary imports of empire (*Empire of Pleasures*, 243–72).

womanly “physique” (*natura*) or “type” (*genus*) through masculine unchastity. Seneca notes the following in this respect:

The illustrious founder of the guild and profession of medicine [Hippocrates] remarked that women never lost their hair or suffered from pain in the feet; and yet nowadays they run short of hair and are afflicted with gout. This does not mean that women’s physique has changed, but that it has been conquered; in rivaling male indulgences, they have also rivaled the ills to which men are heirs (*Non mutata feminarum natura, sed victa est; nam cum virorum licentiam aequaverint, corporum quoque virilium incommoda aequarunt*). They keep just as late hours, and drink just as much liquor; they challenge men in wrestling and carousing; they are no less given to vomiting from distended stomachs and to thus discharging all their wine again; nor are they behind the men in gnawing ice, as a relief to their fevered digestions. And they even rival men in their lusts, although they were born to be passive . . . They devise the most devious type of unchastity—they enter men (*Libidine vero ne maribus quidem cedunt, pati natae, di illas deaeque male perdant! Adeo perversum commentae genus inpudicitiae viros ineunt*). What wonder, then, that we can trip up the statement of the greatest and most skilled physician, when so many women are gouty and bald! Women have lost the privileges of their sex because of their vices and because they have shed womanliness, they are condemned to suffer men’s diseases (*Beneficium sexus sui vitii perdidierunt et, quia feminam exuerant, damnatae sunt morbis virilibus*). (*Ep.* 95.20–21; LCL modified)¹¹⁶

Significantly, Seneca’s rant regarding the masculinization of Roman women sounds just like Martial’s description of the *tribades* Philaenis and Bassa—both wrestle, drink too much (*et oleo et mero viros provocant/meros deunces*; 7.67.10), are vomituous gluttons (*aequo vomitu remetiuntur/vomuit*; 7.67.10) and have penetrative sex (*viros ineunt/pedicat pueros tribas Philaenis et tentigine saevior mariti undenas dolat in die paellas*; 7.67.1–3) that rivals men in libido (*Libidine vero ne maribus quidem cedunt/libidinatur, non fella . . . parum virile*; 7.67.13–14).¹¹⁷

If we can agree that the formation of this stereotype is at work in the denunciations of Greek women’s gender-deviance by Ovid, then Seneca’s treatment of masculinized Roman wo/men may represent a critical link between the Roman stereotype of foreign gender-monstrosity and the Roman stereotype of the Greek *tribas*, especially as a portent

¹¹⁶ Cf. Hallett, “Female Homoeroticism,” 261.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 263. There is good reason for the similarity. As Hallett argues, Martial’s depictions of the *tribas* probably drew directly on this passage or on a common tradition they both knew.

of Roman decline.¹¹⁸ In addition, Seneca's narrative contains two critical elements of the tribadic stereotype that are even more explicit than in Martial's epigrams: the physical transformation of women into men as a result of their acts and the alignment of that masculinization with Roman disease brought on by the "unnatural" mixing of things foreign and Roman. In an echo of Ovid, Seneca emphasizes that women's nature or physique (*natura*) has not changed (*non mutata*) but has been conquered (*sed victa est*) by their gender-liminal activities.¹¹⁹ Seneca's metaphor of imperial expansion implies that women could vanquish their natural "physique" (*natura*), their "type" (*genus*) as a "born-passive" (*pati natae*), through hyper-masculine acts of gluttony, overdrinking, athleticism and sexual penetration. Further, this act of war on the body had to include the unnatural growth of a phallus in order for these wo/men to penetrate men sexually (no dildo is mentioned). Although left unstated—just as it was in Ovid (*Metam.* 9)—the fact of this growth and the fact that it is contrary to women's nature (*contra naturam*) both became critical assumptions in Seneca's argument. Indeed, the unnatural character of the physical transformation of Roman women into men (*quia feminam exuerant*),¹²⁰ produced by their masculine actions and evidenced in their masculine diseases, is the linchpin proof in Seneca's larger argument that "unnatural combinations" (*ex contrariis naturae partibus*) are diseasing the larger Roman body through the Romans' luxurious, post-conquest mixing of foreign and Roman "types" (*genus*) of "food." Lest Romans forget their austere past (and ethnic superiority) and the need to eschew foreign ways, Seneca warns them with metaphors of war and gluttony, paired with the ideological stereotype of the foreign gender *monstrum*, that after "ravaging land and sea" luxury blends different types of people that must surely not be mixed (95.19).

¹¹⁸ As Hallett argues, "Seneca's claim that such women *perversum commentae [sunt] genus* is recalled by Martial's statement in 1.90.9 that *Bassa commenta es dignum monstrum*" and portended by Ovid's *omnia Crete monstra ferat* (*ibid.*, 263).

¹¹⁹ Brooten limits the meaning of *natura* to "genitalia," emphasizing the lack of mutation in women's bodies (*Love between Women*, 45). Hallett reads *natura* as referring more generally to "women's nature" as expressed in the body, a point supported by Seneca's culminating argument that they have shed "the feminine" (*quia feminam exuberant*). She argues that Seneca's rhetorical emphasis lies in the last half of the crucial line, *Non mutata feminarum natura, sed victa est* ("Female Homoeroticism," 261).

¹²⁰ Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 261.

Seneca the Elder and Juvenal: Battling the Threat

Elite Roman ideology aligned gender-monstrosity, luxury and unchastity with foreign ways, especially those of the Greek East. Latin writers of the imperial period portrayed the presence of Greek ways in Rome as portents of disease within the imperial body and they projected that imperial anxiety upon active Roman women by stereotyping them as monstrous *tribades*, women capable not only of transforming themselves into androgynes through masculine acts but also of bugging men but good, as Seneca the Younger delineated. This stereotype of the *tribas* functioned as a warning of an invading eastern pathogen that, if left unchecked, would spread the disease of Greek androgyny throughout the empire, enervating and effeminizing it.

Written at two different points in the growth of empire, the Elder Seneca's *Controversies* and Juvenal's *Satires* deployed in differing ways the figure of the *tribas* in order to defeat this perceived eastern threat. In *Controversies* 1.2.22–23, the Elder Seneca (ca. 55 B.C.E.–40 C.E.) linked tribadism, adultery and anti-Hellenism to propagandize about Roman domination over the Hellenes. According to Seneca, a Roman orator named Scaurus complained that Greek orators allowed themselves “every license” to win their cases. To prove his point, he described a Greek declaimer Hybreas who recounts a story about a husband who discovers two *tribades* having sex, killing them both as adulterers (*illo qui tribadas deprehendit et occidit*).¹²¹ Since one of them was his wife, the husband first examined “the man” to determine how he penetrated her: “But I looked at the man first, to see whether he was natural or sewn-on.” According to Scaurus, the first problem is that Hybreas details (in Greek) the husband's shame in this discovery and examination. But then another Greek declaimer, Grandaus, compounds Hybreas's gaff by arguing first in Latin that male adulterers should not be killed, but then in Greek that androgynous faux-males (*phēlarrena moichon*) like the *tribas* could be. Seneca then repeats the point of the tale: “Even if it costs you your case, some things are better left unspoken rather than spoken at the cost of your shame.”

We might ask what this short story assumes about the identity of the *tribas*. Since it describes one of them as a hermaphrodite or a

¹²¹ Hybreas was a contemporary of Mark Antony (Hallett, “Female Homoeroticism,” 260, citing Plutarch, *Ant.* 24.5; cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.2.24).

“sewn-on” faux-male, *tribas* cannot be a designation for female same-sex intercourse. Seneca’s focus on the gender of the tribadic adulterer and the gender-implications for the husband shamed by inspecting h/im suggests that tribadism was *fundamentally* an issue of the threat of gender-liminality, which played out *both* sexually and socially (rather than being primarily about sexual penetration or adultery).¹²² When tribadism occurred with matrons, and so as a result was located discursively within the legal matrix of Roman adultery, *it assimilated the adulterous wife as the penetrated (non-gender-deviant) party to the gender-liminality of the actor, thereby effeminating the gender-status of the offended male party, the violated husband.*

Significantly, however, the question of *tribades*’ identity was not the point of Seneca’s account. What we learn from the *Controversies* is that the literary personae of the *tribas* (hermaphrodite, pseudo-male, adulterer, penetrator) are ciphers for the imperial politics of gendered communication between Roman men. In this passage the *tribas* is a coded image signifying to Romans the effemination of both the husband and Greek orators by *Greek* gender-liminality. In other words, the masculine *tribas* screwed the husband directly. In fact, the *tribas* triply emasculated the husband. Not only did a demi-man bed his wife, but the husband had to inspect the *tribas* to see whether h/e was hermaphroditic and then he had to report his findings to other men—not a good day at all for the husband! The *tribas* shamed the Greek declaimers, on the other hand, by embodying the inferiority of Greece to Romans. By having the Greek declaimer Grandaus switch to Greek to describe the adulterous *tribas* as a *phēlarrena moichon*, Seneca highlights the Greek identity of the gender-monstrous “faux-male.”¹²³ Seneca also portrays the Romans as a civilized people who would no more recount such a lurid controversy (much less in Latin) than they would discuss the emasculating possibility that a hellenized half-man could bed a Roman’s wife. In other words, Seneca’s use of the *tribas* was the ideological means by which Roman men reinforce among their *amici* the truths they shared: that the Greeks

¹²² The *evidence* of tribadic gender-liminality was primarily (though not exclusively) sexual, *not* because tribadism was an aberrant “sexuality,” but most likely because sex was the most intimate site of “unnatural,” androgynous interethnic mixing and because tribadic phallicization violated the imperial *vir*’s gender-identity, which pivoted on exclusive ownership of the penetrating penis.

¹²³ The ethnic identification is compounded by *moichos*, which, transliterated as the Latin *moechus*, is a Greek loanword for “adulterer.”

were their cultural inferiors; that Greek gender-monstrosity in others could adulterate their masculinity; and, thus, that the civility and stability of home, society and empire depended on expunging that eastern tribadic threat.

Written after a full century of imperial Roman rule, Juvenal's *Satires* 6.290–314 conjoins the same tropes—tribadic sex, the public shaming of prominent men and the eastern threat to empire—in order to blame Greek luxury for the masculinization of Roman matrons and to portray the future of Roman virility as dependent on quashing it.¹²⁴ And, just like Martial, Juvenal locates this threat in Rome's present. Expanding on themes adduced by Seneca the Younger, Juvenal begins by denouncing the effemination of the empire by Greek luxury (6.1–6, 16–20), saying that Greek influence marked the flight of Chastity, the death of the Golden Age and the origin of adultery in Rome (6.24)—all of which are epitomized in the rise of monstrosities (*monstra*) among Roman matrons (6.286–305).

Juvenal's leading example of the dire state of Roman hellenization follows immediately on this claim, in a story about Roman women's sexual (probably tribadic) excess (6.306–13). Evoking images of Greek-influenced bacchanalian rites, Juvenal accuses Tullia and Maura of "riding [each other] horseback" by the ancient altar of Chastity.¹²⁵ Juvenal does not name their act as tribadic, but his poetry rivals Martial in bite and matches him in both rhetorical technique (double entendre, innuendo) and emphasis (on their debauched masculinization). Juvenal depicts the Roman aristocrat Tullia and her infamous sidekick (probably the foreign freedwoman) Maura out on a post-feast nocturnal romp in which they do homage to their excess by "pissing on" the statue of Chastity and "filling it with long squirts." Employing double entendre on *urina*—a synonym for semen often

¹²⁴ As Skinner shows (*Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*, 251), Juvenal's second satire refers not to tribadic sex but to the effeminacy of Stoicized Roman male-judges who love cunnilingus. Juvenal portrays the matron Laronia as responding to the charge of effeminate Roman men that women flout the *lex Julia* by retorting that elite Roman women are not cunnilinctors. Keeping in mind that "cunnilinctor" was a denunciation of male-pathics, the implication of Laronia's charge is that, while Roman women don't do "many" masculine things (only wrestling and eating a bit of meat), *even they are more masculine than Roman men*.

¹²⁵ For an outstanding translation, see Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 206.

linked to humiliating acts of ejaculation¹²⁶—Juvenal paints the two urinators/ejaculators as masculine comminglers of Roman and foreign “seed.”¹²⁷ The “ladies” then complete their act of debauched gender-deviance by “riding each other” with the Moon for a *testis* (witness/testicle).¹²⁸ Like other passages on the *tribas*, Juvenal here plays on the themes of masculinization and foreign influence (in the form of Maura and the narrative setting) to portray vividly a Roman matron’s *monstrum*. Further, the sociopolitical problem with Tullia’s sexual activity—indeed the point of 6.306–13—is consistent with other imperial era portraits of tribadism. As Juvenal notes, speaking directly to his audience of Roman men, “You, when daylight comes, go to salute your mighty friends, all the while treading on the traces of your wife’s ‘urine.’” Juvenal emphasizes that Tullia and Maura’s antics by the altar of Chastity are not only unchaste and unRoman, they have also emasculated Tullia’s husband who, ignorant of his wife’s defilement, is “in all ways pathetic—humbled by powerful men, stained by his wife, and too ignorant to know what is going on.”¹²⁹

This punch line is not only a potent barb at Roman matrons’ Hellenic masculinity, but also a pointer to Juvenal’s larger point, which he revisits throughout his sixth satire: matrons’ masculine, Hellenic monstrosities are emasculating Roman men and enervating the empire. Beginning with a lament to the death of Chastity and the Julian law at the behest of Greek debauchery (6.1, 38), Juvenal whines that women are now tyrants (*dominam*) over their spouses (6.30, 224; cf. 47–48). He then vomits a litany of caricatures: fickle lovers of the foreign and base, senators’ wives pursue gladiators even to Egypt, a *prodigia* of Roman moral decline (6.82–84). Devotees of foreign superstitions like Cybele (6.511–610), matrons are also, like Philaenis, gender-bending athletes and wrestlers unsatisfied with being either women or men (6.246–67). Imitating politicians, philosophers and empresses, they embarrass their husbands in front of senators with their knowledge of world affairs and their correction of their grammar. Indeed, as Juvenal frames it, they might even don Roman mens’ tunics and

¹²⁶ Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 142: “In Greek *moichos* (‘adulterer’) is the agent noun corresponding to *omeichō*, ‘to urinate.’” Cf. Juvenal, *Sat.* 11.170; Catullus, *Carm.* 67.30; Horace, *Sat.* 1.2.44; 2.7.52; Persius, *Sat.* 6.73; Martial 11.46.2.

¹²⁷ Richlin, *Garden of Priapus*, 206.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 206 n. 70; Horace, *Sat.* 1.8.35–36.

¹²⁹ Richlin, *Garden of Priapus*, 207.

visit the public baths (6.398–412, 434–56). Further, matrons of the *Domus Caesarum* were adulterous whores with unquenchable libidos (Messalina; 6.114–35); haughty broads requiring imperial triumphs as their marriage portion (Cornelia; 6.161–71); intent on driving their husbands insane (Caesonia; 6.614); and murderers-by-mushroom (Agrippina; 6.620). Worst of all, says Juvenal, “no woman believes in her own beauty unless she has converted completely from a Tuscan to a Greek,” speaking the language and practicing Hellenic wanton loves (6.184–99). It is no surprise, then, that he wished Roman men could lock women indoors (6.362). Juvenal’s charges of matrons’ monstrous masculinity, sexual excess and hellenization echo Roman men’s fear, vividly depicted in the imperial stereotype of the *tribas*, that matrons’ gender-bending activity and love of Greece are prodigies of disaster—that their growing sociopolitical strength is effeminating Roman men, enervating the Roman Empire and paving the way for the conquering Hellenes to regain power.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis I have undertaken in this essay indicates that the term *tribas* referred not to a person with a particular sexual or gendered identity. It was rather a Roman imperial gender-stereotype, a propaganda tool that deployed a variety of images—unnatural androgyny, portentous eastern lust, sexual dominion, illicit masculinity, adultery and husbandly humiliation—to enable imperial Roman men to communicate with each other about the potential loss of their “virile” hegemony and to encourage the control of Roman matrons and Greeks *as groups*. Prominent Roman men worried that active matrons might, through their “gender-deviant, Hellenic masculinity,” come to dominate them and, thereby, destroy the empire. This fear seems to have increased with the rise of one-man rule, the growing political power of Roman matrons and the deepening impact of Greek practices on Roman life during the post-conquest period of Roman luxury (post ca. 133 B.C.E.) and the “Second Sophistic” (50–200 C.E.). Significantly, the portrait of tribadism shifted from a Greek practice of the hoary past (Ovid) to a Hellenic threat of the recent past (Seneca the Elder, Seneca the Younger) to an example of full-blown, present-day Roman decline on account of Greek influence (Phaedrus, Martial, Juvenal), all of which coincided with

the respective sociopolitical changes taking place under the Roman Empire, indicating that the figure of the *tribas* was a reflection of and response to *virī*'s growing paranoia regarding their control of the empire. In other words, *it appears that the Romans did not take the figure of the tribas over from the Greeks, but invented the tribas whole cloth as a "gender-monstrous Greek penetrator" from the Greek verb tribein, which merely means "to rub."*¹³⁰

As a Roman propaganda tool, the figure of the *tribas* was constructed on two components: Roman fear of women's physical transformation into androgynous-men and Roman characterizations of androgynes as unnatural foreign gender-freaks (*monstra*) who were either born hermaphroditic or could change body forms. As a phallicized Roman matron who screwed Roman men by adulterating their wives, the *tribas* embodies the *unspeakable* potential for sociopolitical instability and public humiliation Roman men attached to their wives—and their ever-growing (sociopolitical) phallus.¹³¹ Likewise, as a Greek gender-monster whose rhetorical phallus adulterated Roman women and portended imperial disaster, the *tribas* symbolized interethnic competition, which was perceived as an attempt by scurrilous Hellenes to "screw" their Roman betters. Allusions to lurking "Greek androgyny" are present in every Latin text discussed; likewise, Ovid, Martial and Juvenal employ the language of monstrosity explicitly, while the Senecas do so allusively. As "hidden beings revealed" (*hermaphroditos anasyromenos*), as beings whose sex acts were necessarily gender-liminal and as prodigies portending disaster and interethnic war, the Roman imperial stereotype of foreign androgyny depicted perfectly the tribadic threat to Roman masculinity posed by politically active Roman matrons and their pernicious ("sexual") spread of hellenophilia. Itself a conflation of images of Greek sexual excess

¹³⁰ The term *tribas* did not occur before the Roman imperial period and, if Bernadette Brooten's compendious study is accurate, there are no instances of the Greek term that predate the Latin "derivative." The term is also a misnomer (cf. Hallett, "Female Homoeroticism," 259–60). Other Latin nouns derived from *tribein* include the non-sexual terms *flagitriba* ("wearer-out of whips") and *ultimatriba* ("wearer-out of elm rods"), but neither retains its Greek nominative ending as *tribas* does (ibid., 259).

¹³¹ Seneca the Elder explicitly names as unspeakable the idea that *Roman* women could have phalluses; Ovid and Seneca the Younger refuse to name the feminine-phallus upon which their narratives pivot; and Martial and Juvenal do so indirectly, employing puns, innuendo and double entendre to phallicize their antagonists.

and Greek gender-liminality, the specter of tribadic androgyny crystallized the perceived dangers posed to the imperial Roman male hegemony by Roman matrons and Greeks as stereotyped groups of Roman “others.”¹³² Given what we know about the Roman politics of gender, it can hardly surprise us that this was the response of elite Roman men. Roman elites thought that the stability of society and empire required their domination of all others. The Roman imperial invention of the *tribas* as a portentous Greek gender-freak was merely a means to that end.

The distinctively Roman imperial character of the *tribas* suggests that we must study terms such as *hetairistria*, which scholars typically conflate with the *tribas* as a reference to female homoeroticism, independently and within its own socio-cultural settings before we draw conclusions about their interrelationship. Despite the fact that the terms *hetairistria* and *tribas* were equated in medieval texts, earlier passages suggests that they were defined differently.¹³³ In the first place, elite Roman writers of the imperial period did not use it at all (they used *tribas*). Second, Greek references to *hetairistria* originate before the Roman Empire, in a fourth-century B.C.E. Platonic allusion (*Symp.* 189d–92b).¹³⁴ Finally, while they agreed with their Roman

¹³² This analysis of tribadism as a Roman imperial ideological phenomenon hints that sculptures of womanly hermaphrodites who wrestle with satyrs—in particular, those who aggressively pursue satyrs—might have been popular in Rome because they were visual reminders of the dangers posed by “tribadic” matrons. Romans treated gender-bending women’s wrestling as a Greek import and it is a major motif in portraits of phallicized-women/*tribades* in Seneca the Younger, Martial and Juvenal. In fact, in Juvenal it not only occurs in *Satire* 6 but also in *Satire* 2.53 as a way to contrast matrons’ masculinity with the politically threatening effeminacy of Roman men. In addition, satyrs were imagined as oversexed, Greek monsters (and, as Ajootian notes, they could represent danger as well as Dionysian sexual abandon [“Only Happy Couple,” 233]). Understood in these terms, the pairing and juxtaposition of defensive or fleeing satyrs with hermaphrodites (who are voluptuously feminine yet also larger, aggressive and sexually aroused) may serve as a visual allegory of the danger of Roman matrons becoming *tribades*.

¹³³ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 5, 337. The scholiast on the fourth-century C.E. Pseudo-Lucianic *Erotes* says that the Athenian comic poet Philocrates ridiculed Philaenis as a *hetairistria* and a *tribas* (ibid., 55 n. 119). The simplest reading of this text is that the terms connote different meanings.

¹³⁴ As Plato notes, “Women who are cuttings of [originally double-sided] women-beings do not pay much attention to men but are more inclined to women, and *hetairistria* are of this group” (*Symp.* 191e). Further, courtesans (*hetairai*) frequented the Athenian symposium setting of the *Symposium*; later Greek works by Asclepiades (*Greek Anthology* 5.207), Lucian (*Dial. meretr.* 5) and Alciphron (*Ep.* 4.14) linked *hetairistria*, *hetairai* and *symposia*, depicting *hetairistria* as courtesans (*hetairai*) who reveled together at drinking parties.

counterparts in emphasizing masculinity and promiscuity, Greek texts on *hetairistriaí* do not treat their subjects as foreigners (non-Greek), adulterers, prodigies or threats. On the contrary, *hetairistriaí* were depicted simply as debauched Greek comic figures. Lucian represented Megilla/os (from Lesbos) and Demonassa (from Corinth) as oversexed, masculinized pursuers of a feckless courtesan, Leana. Alciphron describes them similarly, as carousing Greek drinking-party animals. It may well be that at that time *hetairistriaí* referred to a stereotype of licentious *symposia*-going *hetairai*.¹³⁵

Similarly important is the study of Roman era Greek texts on *hetairistriaí* and *tribades*, especially those detailing the ideological role of Roman “tribadism” in the ongoing, interactive process of Greek and Roman ethnic identity formation during the “Second Sophistic.” In particular, Greeks embraced the ideological portrait of the Roman *tribas* as a societal gender-deviant but removed anti-Greek allusions to *tribades* as foreign *monstrae* in order to empower themselves as actors under empire. For instance, Lucian’s *Dialogue of the Courtesans* takes pains to raise the question of the gender of the masculine lesbian Megilla/us and, while he states clearly that *hetairistriaí* like h/im were “unwilling to suffer it from men but only willing to consort with women as if they were men” (*Dial. meretr.* 5.2.289), he also underscores that Megilla/us was not a man hiding among women, a hermaphrodite or a shape-shifting androgyne like Tiresias of Thebes (5.291–92). S/he rather has the mind of a man and “something else” (an *olisbos*) that enables her to love as a man. In other words, Lucian explicitly characterizes Greek *hetairistriaí* as *not-tribades*, rejecting dominant

¹³⁵ Plato gives the etiology of *hetairistriaí* as a function of the physical fracturing of originally double-sided humans (*Symp.* 189d–92b). Scholars of homoeroticism focus on the same-sex character of the description (although the text says simply that *hetairistriaí* are but a *subset* of a group of women who are *more* interested in their same-sex cohorts than in men). On the connection of *hetairistriaí* with *hetairai* and *symposia*, see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 172; and Leslie Kurke, “Inventing the *Hetaira*: Sex, Politics, and Discursive Conflict in Archaic Greece,” *CA* 16 (1997): 106–54. More study of the subject and its potential links to Roman tribadism is clearly needed. The Roman stereotype of the *tribas* includes limited allusions to the Greek *hetaira* (and potentially to *hetairistriaí*). These are the courtesan Phronesium in Plautus’s *Truculentus*; the implicit link of “Philaenis” to the third-century B.C.E. courtesan Philaenis in Martial; and *possibly* the implied narrative setting of a post-drinking party romp in Juvenal. If the links between tribadism and *hetairai/hetairistriaí* were ideologically significant, they would have linked Roman tribadism to Greek prostitution. The most obvious connection between prostitution and tribadism is the phallicization of the clitoris from overuse.

contemporary Roman explanations of tribadism as somatically phallicized. For Lucian of Samosata (an Atticizing satirist from the Euphrates valley area), the *hetairistria* functioned as a rhetorical site of resistance to Roman imperial self-definition.

Unlike Lucian, three other second-century C.E. Greek writers, all of whom were crafting complex social identities as both Greeks and Romans, actually mention *tribades*: Soranos of Ephesus, Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria and Vettius Valens of Antioch. Soranos of Ephesus, a physician who was schooled in Alexandria and practiced in Rome, describes *tribades* as mentally ill in *On Chronic Diseases*.¹³⁶ The text of *On Chronic Diseases* 4.9, which was originally in Greek but is preserved in a fifth-century Latin translation by Caelius Aurelianus, suggests Soranos's assimilation of dominant Roman ideas about the *tribas* to (at least) one typically Greek notion about *hetairistria*:

For [the effeminate men] are just like the women who are called *tribades* (*feminae tribades appellatae*), because they practice both kinds of love (*utraque Venus*), rush (*festino*) to have sex with women more than with men and pursue (*sector*) women with an almost masculine jealousy, and, when they are freed from the disease or are temporarily relieved, they seek to accuse others of that from which they are known to suffer [then in their baseness of spirit, worn out by their two-fold sexuality (*duplici sexu*)], as though often ravished by drunkenness, they, bursting forth (*erumpo*) into new forms of lust that have been nourished by shameful custom (*consuetudo turpis*), rejoice in the outrage (*iniuria*) to their own sex.¹³⁷

Soranos's point is that *tribades*, like effeminates, have a gender-deviant disease of their spirits or minds that is evidenced in their sexual actions; that disease is their *duplex sexus*, the androgynous possession, within one body, of characteristics of both body-types.¹³⁸ But let us analyze the ideological dimension of his text further. Like Plato's reference to *hetairistria*i in his *Symposium*, Soranos's *tribades* prefer the company of women to men, but not exclusively so; they practice both active sex (penetrating women) and passive sex (receiving the masculine phallus). Like Lucian's *hetairistria*i, then, they also do not seem to be somatically phallicized and are not called foreign gender-monsters. In other words, Soranos's portrait drops the aspects of

¹³⁶ See Brooten, *Love between Women*, 140–62.

¹³⁷ Translation taken from *ibid.*, 150.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 151.

the Roman ideology of tribadic androgyny that were so damning to *Greeks*. Nevertheless, in every other way, Soranos's depiction of the *tribas* conforms to the Roman portrait: tribadic sex is associated with physical androgyny (but *internally*, in the spirit);¹³⁹ with shameful customs; and with sexual excess and drunkenness that leads to the insane masculine pursuit of women.¹⁴⁰ Soranos has thus explained the problem of androgynous tribadism in Roman terms while making it "Greek-friendly."

The famous second-century Alexandrian astrologer and astronomer Claudius Ptolemy similarly argues in the *Tetrabiblos* that tribadism was a gender-disease of the soul expressed in *tribades*' masculine sexual-roles.¹⁴¹ As Brooten details, Ptolemy's *tribades* include only sexual penetrators who are active and masculine:

When the Sun and the Moon are alone in masculine signs of the zodiac, men exceed in natural sexual inclinations, while women exceed in unnatural ones, "so as merely to increase the virility and activity of the soul." Further, if Mars and/or Venus also become masculine . . . women lust after unnatural (*para physin*) [sex] and "cast inviting glances of the eye." Such women, called *tribades*, take the active sexual role with women and perform male functions. If Venus alone is made masculine, such women are secret *tribades*, but if Mars is as well, they live openly and sometimes even call their partners lawful wives. (*Tetrabiblos* 3.14.171)¹⁴²

Ptolemy assumes that the motion of the planets (which are identified in Roman terms) could affect the gender-balance of the body and, by virilizing and activating some women's souls, these movements could turn them into *tribades* who performed male functions with women. In so arguing, Ptolemy embraces Roman ideological characteristics of tribadism—the category of the unnatural, the penetrator, hiddenness and the overturning of Roman marital relations—but again drops its allusions to gender-monstrous foreign androgyny. Similarly, Vettius Valens, who completed his *Anthologiae* around 175

¹³⁹ On diseases of the spirit, see Plato, *Tim.* 86b. On the materiality of the spirit, see Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3–37. Soranos's medical argument is compatible with Lucian's comic quip that Megilla/us has a "masculine mind."

¹⁴⁰ Brooten, *Love between Women*, 154–55.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 124–28.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 125–27, esp. 126 (her translation). Cf. Vettius Valens, *Anth.* 2.17 (for text, see *ibid.*, 129).

c.e., simply lists tribadism among a variety of other diseases that were caused by particular alignments of the signs of the Zodiac (“women in illicit liaisons, *tribades*, the licentious, the servile, and the foul-doers”; 2.37.17).¹⁴³

Thus, contrary to Lucian of Samosata’s practice, all three of these Greek-speaking authors dropped the native Greek term *hetairistriaí* and its associations with courtesans and symposia. They instead embraced the ideological picture of the Roman *tribas* as a societal gender-liminal entity; thus having removed anti-Greek allusions to *tribades* as foreign monsters, they now explained the *tribas*’s problematic masculinity within Greek medicinal (and, in turn, Roman or Greek astrological) terms, as a disease of the spirit. In so doing, they accepted the Romans’ power to name gender problems affecting their social realities, while asserting the authoritative nature of Greek medicine to diagnose and treat those very ills. In short, because the *tribas* was empowered as a Roman ideological invention, tribadism could serve not only as a site of Greek resistance to empire, but also as an ideological site of assimilation and cultural empowerment for Greek subjects of the Roman Empire.¹⁴⁴ This insight suggests that it is time for scholars of tribadism to turn from the quest to recover from that category the social identity of “real” sexual actors of the past to the study of the very real role of rhetorical stereotypes in the maintenance of empire and as a site of interethnic identity formation.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 129.

¹⁴⁴ Also see Pseudo-Lucian’s fourth-century *Erotes* 28, which repeats the Roman imperial stereotype almost unchanged; and the works of Manetho (date uncertain, but somewhere between the first and fourth centuries c.e.) and Hephaision of Thebes (415 c.e.). Cf. Brooten, *Love between Women*, 123, 138.

GENDER AND GEOPOLITICS IN THE WORK OF PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA: JEWISH PIETY AND IMPERIAL FAMILY VALUES*

Mary Rose D'Angelo

Mapping gender in Philo is an enterprise that can draw on a substantial body of scholarship. Some thirty-five years ago, Richard Baer showed that for Philo “male” and “female” function as philosophical categories; since then, gender has been recognized as central to Philo’s work and thought, being constitutive of the polarities and hierarchies that construct his world.¹ Among the many recent studies of considerable sophistication, one at least has already used a spatial metaphor: Sharon Lea Mattila has plotted a “gender gradient”

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¹ See Richard A. Baer, *Philo’s Use of the Categories Male and Female* (ALGHJ 3; Leiden: Brill, 1970); Dorothy Sly, *Philo’s Perception of Women* (BJS 209; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); Judith Romney Wegner, “Philo’s Portrayal of Women: Hebraic or Hellenic?,” in “*Women Like This*”: *New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. A.-J. Levine; SBLEJL 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 41–66; Sharon Lea Mattila, “Wisdom, Sense Perception, Nature and Philo’s Gender Gradient,” *HTR* 89 (1996): 103–29; Annawies van den Hoek, “Endowed with Reason or Glued to the Senses: Philo’s Thoughts on Adam and Eve,” in *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. G. P. Luttikhuisen; Themes in Biblical Narrative 3; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 63–75; Leslie Baynes, “Philo, Personification and the Transformation of Grammatical Gender,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 14 (2002): 31–47; Colleen Conway, “Gender and Divine Relativity in Philo of Alexandria,” *JSTJ* 34 (2003): 471–91; Holgar Szesnat, “‘Pretty Boys’ in Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 10 (1998): 87–107; and idem, “Philo and Female Homoeroticism: Philo’s Use of γυνανδρος and Recent Work on *Tribades*,” *JSTJ* 30 (1999): 140–47. Particularly helpful on the problems of reconstructing “real” women behind Philo’s work are Ross Kraemer, “Monastic Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Egypt: Philo Judaeus on the Therapeutides

in her study of Philo's use of female personifications.² Her work has made it hard to avoid reading Philo in terms of an ascending scale in which true masculinity is next, if not equal, to divinity, as Colleen Conway suggests in her study of Philo's Moses.³

The polarities and hierarchies of gender can by no means be restricted to Philo's intellectual world. As has been widely recognized, Philo also pronounces on the proper control of women. The origin of these *dicta* has inspired much interest. In the past they have been taken as "Jewish"; they were used as evidence that ancient Jews (in contrast to Romans) secluded women in "women's quarters," subordinated women to men and subjected them to misogyny.⁴ In reaction to this assumption, Judith Wegner analyzed Philo's views on women, describing them as "Hellenic" rather than as being drawn from the Hebrew Bible.⁵ More recent studies have avoided the suggestion that his views on women are derived from the status of Greek-speaking women in either Hellenistic or Roman Alexandria. Rather, they are (rightly) seen as generated by and for Philo's philosophical and interpretive enterprise.

In this essay I will take a different approach to mapping gender in Philo, suggesting that Philo's gender categories are plotted not only using the hierarchies of middle Platonism but also the moral propaganda of the Roman Empire. My aim is not to turn from "blaming patriarchy" in Philo's work on the "influence" of Jewish tradition or Greek philosophy to blaming his patriarchy on Roman law or practice.⁶ Rather, I want to focus on Philo's creative apologetic

and Therapeutidae," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14 (1989): 342–70; Holgar Szesnat, "Mostly Aged Virgins': Philo and the Presence of the Therapeutrides at Lake Mareotis," *Neotestamentica* 32 (1998): 191–201; and Joan E. Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's "Therapeutae" Reconsidered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

² Mattila, "Wisdom, Sense Perception, Nature," esp. 103–7, 28–29; cf. chart on 117.

³ Conway, "Gender and Divine Relativity," esp. 487–91.

⁴ One early and influential example was Leonard Swidler's *Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976), passim, but esp. 63–64, 66–69, 118–21; cf. idem, *Biblical Affirmations of Woman* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), esp. 131–34.

⁵ Wegner, "Philo's Portrayal of Women," especially the conclusions on 64–65.

⁶ See Sara J. Tanzer's objection to switching from "blaming patriarchy on the Jews" to blaming it on the Romans ("Ephesians," in *Searching the Scriptures* [ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza with A. Brock and S. Matthews; 2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993–1994], 1:325–48 [330–31]).

response, which does not reproduce Roman law or the moral propaganda that accompanied it, but represents the moral demands of Judaism as meeting, and indeed exceeding, those of the imperial order. He thus assures both the Jews of Alexandria and their Roman masters that Jewish sexual probity, marital chastity and familial devotion are of such a high standard that the Jewish tradition can instruct the empire and its subjects in the piety, restraint and manliness that enable rule of the world.

Philo's location in the context of Roman geopolitics has recently been underscored by Maren Niehoff, in her study of Philo's representation of Jewish identity. Niehoff focuses on the drawing of group boundaries in Philo's references to Jews, Romans, Egyptians and Greeks.⁷ The Romans are the "proximate others" among these groups. Defining Jewish identity in relation to Roman identity extended to articulating Jewish cultural standards in terms that made them comparable to Roman norms. Niehoff makes a strong case that Philo's construction of the virtues and values of Augustus and Tiberius and of Jewish virtues and values are mutually reinforcing. She identifies the virtues shared by the emperors and the Jews in Philo's paradigm as "religion" (εὐσέβεια) and "self restraint" (ἐγκράτεια).⁸ The Greeks have provided the language, literature and philosophy that Romans and Jews have come to share, but, because the Greeks have not lived up to this great cultural tradition, it is now propagated by the Roman order.⁹ The Egyptians are at the bottom of this scale; they are the implacably alien other—hostile, malicious, vice-ridden and superstitious.

Women and femaleness, I suggest, play the role of Philo's "internal other," those "among us" who contrast with true manliness by displaying, or in very rare cases, transcending, their own deficits.¹⁰ This is hardly a novel observation; the production of women and femaleness as other has been central to feminist theory since Simone de Beauvoir. But aligning Philo's "gender gradient" with his ranking of ethnicities foregrounds the question of how gender functions in the context of imperial politics. While Philo's categorical use of "male"

⁷ Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (TSAJ 86; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 45–158.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 75–110.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 137–58.

¹⁰ For this similar theme in Tertullian, see Brad Windon's essay in this volume.

and “female,” his gendered personifications and his interpretations of biblical characters and narratives are driven by and further his own philosophical exegesis, they also manifest the political investments that originate from his engagement with the Roman imperial order.

AUGUSTUS AND ROMAN IMPERIAL FAMILY VALUES

Philo's apologetic is constructed not in response to generic Roman tradition, but to a carefully nurtured political discourse. In the early imperial period, the “family values” campaigns of Augustus inflated the already considerable political value of sexual and gender conformity, exploiting the nostalgia fostered by the culture wars of the very late republic. In an attempt to remake the bloody image he had acquired during the last years of the triumvirate, Octavian justified his new name “augustus” with demonstrations of duty toward the deities, the family and the *res publica*. He advertised his own *pietas* toward the gods and the nation (*patria*) and laid claim to *virtus* (manliness, virtue) not only by the military victories that brought him to power but also by his reform of Roman mores. Some scholars view *pietas* as the foremost among the imperial virtues foregrounded in Augustus's self-promotion.¹¹ At the height of his power, he deployed the imperial title *pater patriae* to present himself as the guardian of Roman virtue and therefore also the guardian of the Roman right to rule the world.¹²

In the intervening years he had promulgated a series of laws directed at the moral reform of Roman citizens and the empire. The best known of these legal measures were a law promoting marriage and childrearing¹³ and a law criminalizing adultery and *stuprum* (sex with an unmarried citizen girl/boy or submission to penetration on

¹¹ See Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 102–10; and Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 86–90.

¹² See Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), *passim*, but esp. 33–61; as well as Mary Rose D'Angelo, “Εὐσέβεια: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals,” *BibInt* 11 (2003): 139–65.

¹³ This law was usually known as the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* (18 B.C.E.), later revised by the *Lex Papia Poppaea* (9 C.E.).

the part of an adult male citizen).¹⁴ While the political and financial penalties and rewards of the marriage laws primarily affected citizens, and indeed the elite among them, the legal stipulations also bore quite heavily on freedpersons.

The chief effect of the laws was to intrude upon the prerogatives of the family, bringing matters that had once been the province of the *paterfamilias* and the family council under the purview of the state. In particular, the chastity and fertility of women became a matter of state security. Together with a theater law separating the orders and the sexes, as well as legislative attempts to control conspicuous consumption, the Julian laws aimed at “restoring” the nostalgically conceived ideals of Roman frugality and sexual restraint. The Secular Games of 17 B.C.E. commemorated the law’s inauguration of the new age of morality and fecundity with tableaux performed by choruses of matrons, brides, boys and girls.¹⁵ At least through the time of Hadrian, Augustus’s successors reasserted and tinkered with these laws as moral buttresses to their own claims to restore the Republic and to inherit the virtues and mantle of Augustus.

Livia originated the central and increasing role played by the imperial women in displaying the gender correctness of the emperor himself, the *pietas* and *pudicitia* with which the imperial household was conducted.¹⁶ Early in the reign of Augustus, Horace brought her as close as he could to the ideal of chastity, the *univira*, the once-married, one-man woman (despite her prior marriage), a flight of fancy echoed later by Ovid.¹⁷ In 7 B.C.E., to accompany the triumph of her son Tiberius, Livia dedicated a portico and shrine to Concordia, the personification of familial and political harmony. This effort was

¹⁴ *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* or *de adulteriis et pudicitia* (probably also 18 B.C.E.). The proscriptions against sex with a citizen boy and submission to penetration appear to reiterate or revise the stipulations of an earlier law, the *Lex Sca(n)tinia* (from the mid second century B.C.E.). On these laws, see Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), esp. 60–80, 262–98; cf. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 57–59.

¹⁵ Horace, *Sac.* 17–20; cf. Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 57–59.

¹⁶ Octavia also played an important role in Augustus’s propaganda, until her death (9 or 11 B.C.E.), as did Julia, until her disgrace and exile (2 B.C.E.). But Livia exceeded them in status and survived them by many decades. See further Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 91–94 (on Octavia in particular, cf. 67, 180–84).

¹⁷ Horace, *Carm.* 3.14.5: *Unico gaudens mulier marito/prodeat justis operata divi*; Ovid, *Tristia* 2.161–62: *quae nisi te nullo coniugi digna fuit/quae si non esset, caelebs te vita deceret*. Also see Susan E. Wood, *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC–AD 68* (MnSup 194; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 76; and Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 137.

imitated by a woman named Eumachia in Pompeii, who promoted herself and her son with a building modeled on Livia's portico. Eumachia's building, dedicated to *Concordia Augusta et Pietas*, celebrated both her own devotion to Livia and their common familial virtue.¹⁸ Cassius Dio commemorates Livia's dowering of needy girls and donations that supported the children-rearing encouraged by Augustus's laws (58.2.2–3).¹⁹

Livia's importance was enhanced during the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius, which encompass the probable years of Philo's adulthood. Both emperors drew on Augustus's moral propaganda to legitimate their own status and the person of Livia; the marriage laws played important roles in this process. When Augustus died in 14 c.e., his will adopted Livia into the *gens Iulia* and accorded her the title *Augusta*.²⁰ She built the temple of Augustus jointly with Tiberius. By acting as chief priest of Augustus's cult and founding games in his honor on the anniversary of their wedding, she melded familial, imperial and divine piety.²¹ Tiberius's propaganda reflects his need both to emphasize his connection to Augustus through her and to defuse the suggestion that this woman, who now bore two parts of Augustus's name (Julia Augusta), was the real ruler. Thus he rejected the Senate's offer to declare Livia *mater patriae*, but he also struck coins in her honor, including the first Roman coin to bear a woman's name in the inscription.²² Provincial cities, however, were less circumspect than Tiberius, as coins from Leptis Magna acclaim Livia as *Augusta Mater Patriae*. On her death, the Senate voted her an arch, an honor normally reserved for a general who had had a triumph (it was never actually erected).²³

Claudius's troubled accession continued these Augustan moral paradigms, followed as it was by a series of prosecutions for adultery, among them the prosecution and exile of Julia Livilla, the sister of Gaius (Caligula), and Seneca the Younger. While the prosecutions

¹⁸ See Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 246–47; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 320–22; and idem, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life* (trans. D. L. Schneider; *Revealing Antiquity*; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 87–102, esp. 97.

¹⁹ Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 37.

²⁰ Wood, *Imperial Women*, 81.

²¹ Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 210–12.

²² Ibid., 240.

²³ Ibid., 242; on the titles, see Wood, *Imperial Women*, 81.

were motivated by dynastic intrigue and the desire to curb advocates of senatorial rule, they also conveyed a concern with Augustan values manifested in other uses of the Julian laws.²⁴ Livia was deployed among the other relatives to establish Claudius's *auctoritas*. In distinction from the others, she was awarded a public cult in January of 42 C.E. She became Augustus's partner in the imperial cult—her statue was added to his temple at Rome (and presumably elsewhere as well). Games were held in her honor. Some sort of monument to *Pietas Augusta*, voted on in 22 C.E. but not built until later, was dedicated in 43 C.E.; it may have included some commemoration of her.²⁵ Her image and name as a model of feminine virtue and marital fidelity were spread throughout the empire and endured well beyond the reign of Claudius.²⁶ She is, for instance, also named in marriage contracts from Egypt into the second century.²⁷

Although the legal systems of the provinces differed from that of Rome itself, they were not exempt from imperial propaganda. Augustus's conquest of Egypt appears to have introduced vast changes into its economic and social realities, including stringent legal regulation of status and ethnic identity. Roman citizens, "Greeks/Syrians" and Egyptians were carefully distinguished and taxes were allotted by status, with the heaviest taxation falling upon the Egyptians.²⁸ Marriages in particular were regulated. Roman citizens could produce citizen offspring only by marrying another citizen. The Roman code also penalized intermarriage between free Greeks (or Syrians) and Egyptians and prescribed the status of children of mixed marriages

²⁴ On some of the early dynastic moves, see Barbara Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 55–57. On the legal measures, see, for example, Suetonius, *Claud.* 19.1; 23.1.

²⁵ Levick, *Claudius*, 45.

²⁶ Susan Wood observes that, although no officially named images of Livia are known to have been issued before the reign of Claudius, the provinces seem to have been quicker to celebrate her (*Imperial Women*, 87–93).

²⁷ Severy, *Augustus and the Family*, 137.

²⁸ Naphthali Lewis, "Greco-Roman Egypt: Fact or Fiction?," in *Proceedings of the International Congress of Papyrology* (ed. D. H. Samuel; ASP 70; Toronto: Hakkert, 1970), 3–14, esp. 9–11; cf. idem, "The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Growing Consensus," in *Atti XVII Congresso internazionale di papirologia* (Naples: Centro internazionale per lo studio dei papiri ercolanesi, 1984), 1077–84; Alan K. Bowman, "Egypt," in *The Augustan Empire, 43 B.C.–A.D. 69* (ed. A. K. Bowman, E. Champlin and A. Lintott; 2d ed.; CAH 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 676–702 (696); and Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity*, 19–20.

and of children born to a free person and a slave.²⁹ These provisions increased the importance of a woman's ethnic and social status. As papyrus letters and transactions show, at least some of the penalties for childlessness and rewards for childrearing were of significance in Egypt.³⁰ The social tensions that resulted from the Roman imposition of these distinctions were felt throughout the province, but appear to have been particularly acute in Alexandria.³¹

PHILO AND THE ROMAN ORDER

On the basis of *Against Flaccus* and the *Embassy to Gaius*, Philo is usually thought to have been born in the reign of Augustus and to have died before the Jewish War, probably during the reign of Claudius. He appears to have been among the few Jews who could compete in wealth with the Roman elite and some scholars believe he himself was a Roman citizen. If so, the laws would have regulated his family directly. Niehoff lays out the trail left on Philo's work by the Roman reification of ethnic status, particularly through regulation of marriages in Egypt.³² Aline Rouselle has also recognized the Roman context of Philo's work, finding in his views on male-male sex a reflection of Augustus's procreative program, suggesting that those whom Philo excludes from the Jewish assemblies would also be *infames* in Roman law: men who made themselves into women, those who were castrated for sexual use, women prostitutes and the children of prostitutes.³³ But the effect of Roman politics on Philo's representation of Jewish mores is more pervasive even than these observations indicate—so pervasive that no study could be comprehensive.

²⁹ Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity*, 21; but see Jane Rowlandson, "Gender and Cultural Identity in Roman Egypt," in *Women's Influence on Classical Civilization* (ed. F. McHardy and E. Marshall; New York: Routledge, 2004), 151–66 (153), who suggests that the stipulation of proof of maternal status was not original to Augustus's settlement in 30 B.C.E., but emerged over the course of the next century.

³⁰ On the stipulations of the *Gnomon* of the *Idios Logos* for the census qualification that determined those who were subject to penalties under the marriage law, see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 78. As it survives, the *Gnomon* reflects Egypt between 150 and 161 C.E., but many of the prescriptions are thought to date back to the time of Augustus. See further Bowman, "Egypt," 683.

³¹ See Bowman, "Egypt," 688–89, 700–1.

³² Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity*, 17–44.

³³ Aline Rouselle, "Personal Status and Sexual Practice in the Roman Empire," in *Zone 5: Fragments for a History of the Human Body Part 3* (ed. M. Feher, R. Nadoff and N. Tazi; New York: Zone, 1989), 300–33. She uses Philo and Josephus to argue that Roman law punished men with *infamia* for playing the passive role in sex.

In this essay I offer selective illustrations of three areas in which Philo's work interacted with the imperial moral propaganda. First, Philo's work illustrates a turn in the meaning of the Greek virtue εὐσέβεια toward the meaning of the Roman virtue *pietas*. Second, Philo's accounts of the Jewish "constitution" and of Jewish practice emphasize the ways that the family values of the Jews, particularly marital chastity and devotion to the bearing and rearing of children, match or exceed the demands of Roman law and mores. The display of marital chastity, particularly as incumbent on women, and of devotion to child-rearing offer a guarantee of both the moral and religious excellence of the Jews, serving as a basis of apologetic appeal. Third, the constructions of gender and of women that permeate Philo's work and have received so much attention should also be read in terms of Philo's Roman policy.

Jewish Εὐσέβεια as Roman Pietas

Philo can and often does use the important word εὐσέβεια in the way that was common to most Greek texts and many inscriptions in the years between Plato and Augustus, describing the practice of duty and devotion toward the divine, a meaning that translators often convey with the word "religion."³⁴ But in some contexts, particularly in apologetic ones, he uses the word as an equivalent to the Roman virtue *pietas*, which combines devotion to the deity with familial love, affection and responsibility, as well as the display of the appropriate disposition and duty toward all to whom one is related: not only parents and children, spouse and siblings, but also patrons, clients, city and nation, including dependents and authorities of every degree up to and including the emperor.³⁵ The political function of *pietas* that was so heavily emphasized by Augustus is particularly easy to discern in Philo—and it is highly gendered.

³⁴ LSJ cites Plato, *Resp.* 615C, for the first meaning: "reverence toward gods or parents" and, as a third, equates the word with the Latin *pietas*. BGAD concludes as follows: "in our literature and the LXX only of awesome respect accorded to God, devotion, piety, godliness" (412); cf. εὐσεβέω, εὐσεβής and εὐσεβώς. Also see Werner Foerster, σέβομαι κτλ, *TDNT* 7:168–91; he suggests that in the Hellenistic and Roman periods the word was generally allied to the divine but could occasionally refer to other objects as well.

³⁵ See Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge Studies in Population Economy and Society in Past Times; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102–32; cf. idem, "Pietas, Obligation and Authority in the Roman Family," in *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ*

In the *Embassy to Gaius*, written early in the reign of Claudius, familial piety is directly linked to devotion to the emperor and to the deity. Philo dramatically represents the apologetic potential of familial meanings of piety in narrating the Judean resistance to Gaius's decision to install the colossus in the temple. He relates that the Jews approached Petronius in companies arranged by gender and rank, men and women alike divided into elders, young people and children, begging: "Do not cut off the hopes of so many myriads, whose eagerness is not for profit but for piety" (εὐσέβεια; *Legat.* 242). In the LCL edition, F. H. Colson translates εὐσέβειας here as "for our religion." It is certainly the case that their plea is on behalf of maintaining the oneness of God and the aniconic character of Jewish worship.³⁶ But translating εὐσέβεια as "religion" obscures the collaboration between the visual and verbal rhetoric of the protest. The speech Philo gives the ambassadors stresses that their devotion to raising their children is a guarantee of their peaceable nature (230) and that their concern for the temple, which came to them from their grandparents and ancestors (παρὰ τῶν πάππων καὶ προγόνων), is a function of their filial piety (232). The companies should thus be seen as performing a sort of visual tableau of intergenerational piety, not unlike the pageantry created by the choruses of brides, matrons, boys and girls in Augustus's *Secular Games*. Philo's narration of the demonstrations in Judea thus underscores both the Jews' eagerness for the marriage and progeny encouraged in the Julian law on marriage and the propriety of the relations among their genders, ages and orders enforced by the Julian law on adultery and the theater law.

Later in the treatise, Philo produces Agrippa I as an advocate for the sanctity of the temple. The Jewish king, who was raised as a companion to Gaius and supposedly involved in the accession of Claudius, is made to argue from his own history with the imperial house. Philo allows him to speak through a letter to Gaius in which "Agrippa" seeks to demonstrate the filial piety of the Jews toward Gaius's person: "For just as in families the oldest children hold the primacy because they have been the first to give the names of father

zum 65. Geburtstag (eds. P. Kneissl and V. Losemann; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 393–410.

³⁶ Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own. This particular one is taken from the LCL edition (F. H. Colson). Philo tentatively credits Petronius with some rudiments of "Jewish philosophy and piety" (Ἰουδαϊκῆς φιλοσοφίας ἅμα καὶ εὐσέβεια; *Legat.* 245).

and mother to their parents, so too this city [i.e., Jerusalem], since it was the first of eastern cities to address you as emperor, deserves to receive greater boons than they or at least no less" (289; trans. LCL). To preserve the Jews' customs would be an act of both divine and filial piety on Gaius's part, an imitation of his grandfather (M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the close associate of Augustus) and his great-grandfather (Augustus himself).

At the end of this distinguished list, in a climactic but carefully judged accolade, Agrippa turns to the benefactions that Livia, Gaius's great-grandmother, bestowed on the temple. They show her true understanding of the character of Jewish piety, which she was able to achieve only because of the instruction she garnered from her husband Augustus (*Legat.* 309–18) and which enabled her to transcend the defects of her female reasoning power.³⁷ Referring to Livia as Σεβαστή, Philo establishes a link between the imperial title σεβαστή and the virtue εὐσέβεια that probably informs the whole argument.³⁸ Philo's arguments throughout the *Legation* aim to convince his addressees that it is in the empire's best interest to affirm the εὐσέβεια of the Jews, whose familial good order sustain Gaius's rule. Despite the particularity and exclusivity of the Jews' devotion to the deity, the quality of this devotion and its social enactment are consonant with Roman imperial values.

Unsurprisingly, the transformation of εὐσέβεια by imperial *pietas* appears also in *Against Flaccus*, where Philo likewise both seeks to address and to alter the fate of the Jews under Roman rule (*Flacc.* 48–49, 74, 98, 103). The pathos of the Jews' sufferings is underscored by reminders that their women, children and elders also suffered at the hands of enemies who showed no mercy to youth or age (62, 68, 87, 89). But Philo's use of εὐσέβεια as *pietas* is not limited to explicitly apologetic material. In it appears, for instance, Philo's description of the fifth commandment, "honor your father and mother"

³⁷ ὑφηγητῇ τοιούτῳ τῆς εὐσεβείας χρησαμένη καὶ ἡ προμάμμη σου Ἰουλία Σεβαστή (*Legat.* 319).

³⁸ See esp. *Legat.* 305. The word play occurs also in inscriptions of the reign of Claudius and Nero; see, for example, E. Mary Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), #135, 17, 20–21; #203 (b), 4. This link is not possible in Latin, even though *augustus* includes the implication of sacrality.

(τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μήτερα; Exod 20:12 [LXX]).³⁹ In *On the Decalogue*, when Philo describes each of the “ten words” as summaries of the special laws, he positions the fifth commandment as a guardian of the relations in which *pietas* operates:

The fifth commandment, on honoring parents, implies many necessary laws, those written about elders and youths, those on rulers and subjects, those on slaves and masters. For parents belong to the rank of the superior of those mentioned, among whom are elders, governors, benefactors, masters; but children are in the inferior rank, among whom are the youth, subjects, clients (beneficiaries), slaves. And many other prescriptions are added on, for youths on deference⁴⁰ to elders, for elders on care for youth, for subjects on obedience to rulers, for rulers on benefiting the ruled, for clients on returning gratitude, for donors on not exacting a return as in a loan, for slaves on master-loving service, for masters on kindness and mildness by which the inequality is equalized. (*Decal.* 165–67)

Here Philo extends the fifth commandment to that most Roman of relations, patron to client, as well as to the imperial structures of ruler and ruled.⁴¹ In my translation (and indeed in the text itself), the gendered character of these relations is elided. Philo undoubtedly thinks of these decent and reciprocal relations as being conducted among men. But women were subsumed in almost every capacity and had to think themselves into this schema, negotiating these relationships by means they had learned by implication or analogy.

Under the rubric of the fifth commandment, εὐσέβεια enables Philo to argue explicitly that what is most central and particular to Judaism, its devotion to the one God and its practice of the law that God gave through and in Moses, is also the very thing that makes the Jews the most moral and law-abiding, the most family-oriented and responsible, of the emperors' subjects. Though their enemies may claim that the exclusion of the emperor's images from Jewish places of worship undermines the reverence due the emperor, that

³⁹ In *On the Decalogue* (50–51, 106–20, 165–67) and *Special Laws* (2.261–62) Philo allots this commandment to the first “pentad” (concerned with one's relation with the deity) and associates it with εὐσέβεια.

⁴⁰ ἀποδοχὴν—LSJ includes among the possible meanings 1. receiving back; 2. reception, entertainment of guests; 3. acceptance or approbation; Colson translates as “courtesy” (LCL).

⁴¹ On the ideological value of the patron-client relation, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.10.

exclusion flows from a piety that is the best guardian of the order that sustains the empire. Even where Philo makes no explicit appeal to the Roman order, his use of εὐσέβεια appears to be formulated in response to the gendered protocols of imperial family values. To recognize this feature is not to deny that Philo also uses the word to refer to the demands of Jewish theology and worship, even to Judaism itself. In fact, it is precisely that reference that makes its transformation by *pietas* so effective an apologetic tool.

The Law of Moses and the Roman Laws

The transformation of εὐσέβεια by *pietas* is accompanied in Philo's work by readings of Jewish law that reflect the "family values" of the imperial period, especially the Julian laws on marriage and the ideological discourse they addressed and furthered. Not surprisingly, this reflection is easiest to delineate in Philo's interpretation of the commandment against adultery, his sixth commandment.⁴² But other aspects of familial virtue also exhibit this interest.

Perhaps Philo's most explicitly apologetic presentation of the law of Moses appears in Eusebius's excerpts from a work usually referred to as the *Hypothetica*, which formally appears to have been an apology. The first extract offers a rather idiosyncratic version of the exodus, one that is apparently carefully calculated to respond to specific accusations against the Jews' origins (*Praep. ev./Hypoth.* [8.]5.11–6.9). In Eusebius's second extract, Philo offers an epitome of the constitution (πολιτεία) of the Jews ([8.]6.10–7.20).⁴³ One might expect Philo to open his account of Jewish law and polity with a full exposition of the Decalogue, beginning from the oneness of God and worship. Instead, he opens with a dismissal of the ways that unnamed others mitigate the penalties for infractions of their laws. In contrast, he describes the stringency with which the law of Moses prescribes death as the penalty for a list of crimes that seem to fit the category of impiety. His list begins with sexual transgressions ([8.]7.1) and is closely followed by offenses against the divine and the family ([8.]7.2–3). While it is clear that Eusebius has omitted Philo's description of other lawgivers' provisions for exceptions and mitigating circumstances,⁴⁴

⁴² Philo uses the order of Exodus 20 (LXX).

⁴³ Colson treats *Praep. ev.* 8.6.1–9 and 7.1–20 as a single extract, but there is clearly a gap between 8.6.9 and 8.7.1.

⁴⁴ See Colson, LCL, n. a (9:422).

it seems less likely that this passage was originally preceded by a treatment of the Decalogue or other laws (some of which surface in the succeeding passages).

Why then does Philo begin with sexual prohibitions that incur the death penalty? I suggest that he does so because adultery and the associated family of “crimes” have been made a “hot topic” by the Julian law and the highly political prosecutions initiated by the emperors. By opening his discussion of the law with Jewish severity toward sexual crimes, he can present the Jewish polity as able to support and even excel beyond the Roman order:⁴⁵ “This motive is underscored by the terms in which he reports the Jewish stipulations: if you engage in pederasty (παῖδεραστής), if you commit adultery, if you rape a child—do not mention a male child, but even a female—likewise if you prostitute yourself, if also you submit to (παθής) something beyond the age—or think of it, or intend it—the penalty is death” (*Praep. ev./Hypoth.* [8.]7.1). The biblical prohibitions against adultery (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18), “lying with a male as with a woman” (Lev 18:22; 20:13) and rape of a virgin (Deut 22:23–29) are rearticulated by Philo to make clear that Jews are forbidden by their ancestral piety to do those things that transgress the imperial laws and mores. Pederasty, raping a boy and “submitting to something beyond the age” all violate the provisions of the *lex Sca(n)tinia*; adultery and rape of a girl, the *lex Iulia*. Philo’s use of the technical term pederasty manifests his contemporary context. His apparent concession that there is an age below which sexual submission is appropriate is particularly startling, though, given Philo’s violent denunciation of male-male sex in *On the Contemplative Life* (*Contempl.* 52, 57–63), it cannot be pressed too far. Death was not the legal penalty for violations of the Roman laws and only under closely defined circumstances was a father or husband permitted to kill the adulterer and a husband was never permitted to kill his wife.⁴⁶ But *exempla* of *pudicitia* in Valerius Maximus (6.1), which nearly all end in death for the violators of

⁴⁵ Pseudo-Phocylides, a moralist often identified as a Jew of Alexandria writing in the reign of Augustus or Tiberius, also begins the long section on “family values” with sexual stipulations (*Sentences*, 175–79).

⁴⁶ Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 264–75; and Eva Cantarella, “Homicides of Honor: The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millennia,” in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present* (ed. D. I. Kertzer and R. P. Saller; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 229–44.

girls and in some cases for the violators of boys (6.1.10, 11, 12), suggest the ideologically satisfying character of Philo's boast in a Roman context. Thus, although he treats the severity of the law as unique to Moses, he also expects his audience to approve of it, recognizing this severity as evidence for the superiority of Judaism. Philo appears to view all of these offenses as acts of impiety, as are violence and kidnapping for the purpose of enslaving a free person or stealing a slave and the theft of sacrosanct items, whether holy or polluted (βέβηλα; *Hypoth.* [8].7.2).⁴⁷

Both the priority of the commandment on adultery and the updating of its content to encompass particularly Roman sexual sins appear even in Philo's less overtly apologetic works. In *On the Decalogue*, Philo hails it as the first and most important of the second pentad, the commandments regulating one's conduct toward human beings. Characterizing adultery as the greatest of injustices, he attributes the primacy of this commandment to the noxious social effects of adultery, a crime rooted in love of pleasure. Because it involves a partner to whom the offender teaches the corruption of both body and soul, it destabilizes not only three families (that of the adulterer, of the injured husband and of the woman's family of origin) but also the city (*Decal.* 121–31). Philo's interpretation thus combines the order of the biblical text with the weight given to adultery as a moral touchstone by late republican mud-slinging and the Julian law. As a summary like the other “ten words,” the prohibition against adultery actually includes all the special laws that touch on sex: “against corrupters, against pederasts, against those who live dissolutely and engage in lawless and unbridled practices and unions” (*Decal.* 168). The third book of *On the Special Laws* opens with this commandment, enumerating and interpreting a multitude of sexual prescriptions as subsets of it.⁴⁸ Particularly noteworthy is Philo's discussion of Deut 24:1–4. There he explains the prohibition against remarrying a wife

⁴⁷ Colson's translation “profane” obscures the reason for seeing this as an act of impiety (cf. n. d [9:423]).

⁴⁸ The list includes the following: adultery itself (*Spec.* 8–11), forbidden relations (with mother [12–21], with sister, [22–28], with others [29]; cf. Lev 18), remarriage with a divorced wife once she is divorced again or widowed (30–31; cf. Deut 24:1–4), sex with a menstruating woman (32–33), sex with a sterile woman (34–36), pederasty (37–42), gormandizing and wine-bibbing leading to bestiality (43–50), prostitution (51), the law for testing the woman accused of adultery (i.e., *Soṭah* 52–63; cf. Num 5:12–31), rape of a widow (64), *stuprum* with a virgin (65–71) and assault on a virgin (72–78; cf. Deut 22:23–27).

one has divorced after the end of her subsequent marriage as both adultery and “procuring” (προαγωγείαν), which, in Roman terms, is *lenocinium*, the Julian law’s charge against a husband who tolerates his wife’s adultery.⁴⁹ Philo bolsters the charge by accusing the wife of “transgressing her original bonds” by “choosing new loves over old” and so falling from the ideal of the *univira*. He further castigates the husband for “softness and unmanliness” (μαλακίας καὶ ἀνανδρίας; cf. *Spec.* 3.30–31). Equally significant is the consistent emphasis in *On the Special Laws* on the political implications of sexual sins and their impact on communal life. Similarly, when Philo uses the banquets of the Therapeutae as an example of frugality and sexual restraint, he contrasts them with contemporary banquets of “Italic” (not Roman) excess and luxury and with the Socratic banquets of the Greek past and their praise of homoerotic eros, which in his view decimate the cities and unman the men, making them incapable of military and civic *virtus* (*Contempl.* 48–63). By contrast, the (presumably Jewish) Therapeutae are presented in much the same way that Valerius Maximus celebrated Marcus Curtius: he was the “consummate pattern of Roman frugality and at the same time a clearly established model of bravery” (*exactissima norma Romanae frugalitatis exactissima idemque fortitudinis perfectissimum specimen*; 4.3.5 [trans. LCL]).

The next section of the *Hypothetica* (*Praep. ev./Hypoth.* [8.]7.2–3) closely connects the sexual proscriptions to other forms of impiety, especially to violations of piety in the framework of “family values.” Philo notes that the death penalty falls upon words as well as acts of impiety, including not only words against the deity but also against “a father or a mother or a benefactor (εὐεργέτην) of yourself” ([8.]7.2). Benefactors do not appear in the biblical commandment (Exod 21.16).⁵⁰ The addition recalls not only the list of relations that Philo understands to be regulated by the fifth commandment (cf. *Decal.*

⁴⁹ But the motif of the *lenomarius* that was so popular in the Augustan period and the first century C.E. may have been given its political impetus when Caesar accused Cato of pimping his wife Marcia, because he had divorced her to allow Hortensius to marry her, then remarried her as the heir of Hortensius’s quite spectacular fortune. The accusation (of φιλοπλουτίαν καὶ μισθαρνίαν) is reported in Plutarch, *Cato Minor* 52.3–4. For the motif of the *lenomarius*, see Valerie A. Tracy, “The Leno-Maritus,” *CJ* 72 (1976): 62–64. All of her citations, except for Cicero, *Fam.* 7.24, are by Augustan or later authors.

⁵⁰ Colson’s note on this passage underscores the extraordinary character of the addition (n. d [9:423]).

165–67 above), but also his use of the titles “savior and benefactor” for Augustus (*Flacc.* 74).⁵¹ Other stipulations endorse the arrangements of the household: “that wives serve their husbands (γυναῖκας ἀνδράσι δουλεύειν) from no abuse, but for obedience in all things; that parents rule their children (γονεῖς παίδων ἄρχειν), for safety and care; that each one be master (κύριον) of his own possessions unless he has allotted them to God . . .” (*Hypoth.* [8.]7.3). This grouping of commandments recalls the Roman legal definition of *familia* summarized by Ulpian, which included both persons and possessions (*res*), the former consisting of the persons under the *potestas* of the *paterfamilias* (*D* 50.16.195.1).⁵² None of the stipulations Philo puts forward in this passage is explicit in the Pentateuch. The prescription that women/wives must “slave to” (δουλεύειν) their husbands appears to be derived from Gen 3:16 (LXX): “your turning will be to him and he will lord it over you (σου κυριεύσει).” In *On the Creation of the World*, Philo interprets Gen 3:16 to mean that both partners became slaves to passion, but that the woman in particular was penalized by “deprivation of liberty and the domination (δεσποτείαν) of her husband” (*Opif.* 167).⁵³ Philo may read into this text a legal practice in Egypt that made a husband the guardian (κύριος) of women who were not Roman citizens.⁵⁴ But even non-Roman women in the guardianship of their husbands could still hardly be understood to be slaves and Roman social and legal practice stringently distinguished the freeborn *matrona* (who was normally in the *potestas* of her father or *sui iuris*) from the slave. Yet a variety of ideological factors collaborated to make analogies between the two attractive in

⁵¹ These titles are also paired in inscriptions honoring Claudius and Nero; see Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*, #134, 6; #135, 22; #137, 4–5; #203 (b), 3.

⁵² See the text in Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London: Routledge, 2002), 18. Ulpian wrote in the early third century C.E., but Saller regards this aspect of the definition as an ancient one, perduring only in legal contexts (*Patriarchy, Property and Death*, 75–78).

⁵³ On this verse, also see *Leg.* 3.220–21 and *QG* 1.49; cf. *QG* 1.27 and 1.29 on Gen 2:21 and 2:24, respectively.

⁵⁴ But this is not clear. See Naphthali Lewis, “On Paternal Authority in Roman Egypt,” *RIDA* 17 (1970): 251–58, who reviews evidence from the papyri on the question of whether a father’s power over his (non-Roman) daughter continues through her life. Lewis concludes that, at least during most of the first century, the father’s power is understood to continue, though the Roman magistrates of Egypt prefer to dissuade fathers from breaking up a happy marriage.

the Roman context.⁵⁵ *Exempla* stress the same virtues (*fides* and *obsequium*) for women and slaves.⁵⁶ The order of Valerius Maximus's sections on fidelity is particularly striking in this respect: first come examples of the heroic fidelity of men to the *res publica* (6.6: *de fide publica*) then of wives to husbands (6.7) then of slaves to masters (6.8). In the late first century B.C.E., Dionysius of Halicarnassus presents the marital dispensation established by Romulus as enabling husbands "to rule (κρατεῖν) wives as a necessary and inalienable possession" (*Ant. rom.* 2.25.4).

That parents must rule (ἄρχειν) their children more obviously harmonizes with the Roman practice, or rather with the Roman ideology, of *patria potestas*.⁵⁷ Philo's consciousness regarding its ideological importance as a marker of Roman mores emerges in his claim that Gaius adopted Tiberius's son as a calculated step toward eliminating him, because Roman laws give fathers "absolute power" over a son (ἡ γὰρ υἱοῦ παντελὴς ἐξουσία; *Legat.* 28), including the power to put him to death. This description is close to Dionysius's nostalgic *encomium* on *patria potestas*.⁵⁸

The Jewish constitution also outlaws castrating men or causing women to abort by drugs or other devices; reproduction is also protected in animals (*Praep. ev./Hypoth.* [8.]7.7). These provisions do not repeat but rather extend the imperial procreative policies. Philo's defense of the Sabbath justifies the day of rest as an occasion for instruction, enabling assemblies for study of the laws and progress in εὐσέβεια, so that all Jewish men are so expert that a "husband is deemed capable of handing on the laws to wife, father to children,

⁵⁵ See Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, eds., *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), *passim*, but especially their introduction. Cf. the following comments by the editors: "The essays in this volume show how persistently the analogy of slavery was used to define the position of the free woman in her presumed inferiority and subordination to the free man" (Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, "Introduction: Differential Equations," 1–21 [4]).

⁵⁶ See the literature and commentary provided by Holt N. Parker, "Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives: The Crisis of the Outsider-Within and Roman *Exemplum* Literature," in Joshel and Murnaghan, *Women and Slaves*, 152–73.

⁵⁷ This passage does not use the usual translation for *patria potestas*, which is πατριὰ ἐξουσία.

⁵⁸ Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.26.4: "The lawgiver of the Romans gave, as it were, all power to the father over his son (ἅπασαν ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔδωκεν ἐξουσίαν καθ' υἱοῦ) and that for his whole life, if he should choose to beat him, if to force him to work in the fields and in chains, if even to kill him . . ." The whole passage (2.26–27) idealizes and radicalizes *patria potestas*.

master to slaves" ([8.]7.10–17). It is not clear what Philo envisages as Jewish practice here. Philo seems to wish to provide a picture in which only the Jewish head of the house studies in public, while the potentially disorderly family members—women, children and slaves, perhaps also the young—are safely absorbed into a domestic school at home. Does this mean that Jewish children were actually schooled only by their fathers? This picture seems highly unlikely, given its conflict with the actual practice in educating children and youth. Rather, Philo's emphasis on this capacity of the father/husband/teacher to lay down the law to his subjects is meant as a testimony to the extraordinary good order that prevails in the Jewish household and *politeia*.

Philo's treatment of the law of Moses at some points reflects the specifics of the Julian laws because he casts the prescriptions of the law of Moses into contemporary terms—that is, into the terms of life under the Roman imperial order. His construction of the "constitution" of the Jews as focused on, even starting from, the prescriptions of sexual restraint and domestic order thus serves a double function. It presents the Jewish law as the best guardian of the imperial interests and, at the same time, urges the Jews to see these prescriptions as the bedrock that will sustain their *politeia* in the struggles it faces in Alexandria and elsewhere in the Roman world.

Roman Sexual Politics and Philo's Philosophical Interpretation of the Creation

The Roman imperial sexual politics reflected in Philo's use of εὐσέβεια, which include familial and imperial piety and his reading of the Jewish law, also emerges in his interpretations of the creation narratives. These also are far too extensive to cover in a single essay, but I will offer two examples in which the interaction of Philo's philosophical project, his understanding of Judaism and Roman moral propaganda takes place in differing ways.

Philo's idealized picture in which Jewish law is passed on by a male head of the household as the teacher of women, children and slaves evokes echoes from aspects of his philosophical exegesis that are not usually seen as apologetic. The categories "male and female" are especially operative in Philo's allegorical exegesis of Genesis briefly sketched in *On the Creation of the World* (165–69) and are given comprehensive exposition in his *Allegory of the Laws*. In Philo's allegory, Adam (or the first "formed" male) is interpreted as mind (νοῦς), while

Eve/the woman represents sense perception (αἴσθησις), which can be helpful to the mind only in so far as it is subordinated to it. The exegetical application of the categories frequently shades into quite virulent misogyny; in his reading of the Genesis narratives, woman becomes the origin of a life marked by guilt (*Opif.* 151). The identification of the woman with sense-perception and the man with mind is consistent throughout Philo's work and reveals something of his estimation of real women—so much so that Sarah, who is identified with Wisdom (for Philo, Wisdom is female in name only), must be understood as being made male through virginity (*Abr.* 101–2).⁵⁹ Woman/Eve and sense-perception are thus identified as passive and as liable to be deceived, most especially by pleasure in the guise of the serpent.⁶⁰

There can be no doubt that the identification of Eve and her daughters with sense-perception is central to Philo's philosophical project, but that does not exclude a function in Philo's Roman political context. The charge that women's weaker reason or light-mindedness, or even their general weakness or ignorance, made them incapable of conducting their own financial affairs was the traditional justification for the requirement of *tutela* for women.⁶¹ This explanation and its social consequences received philosophical grounding from the Aristotelian doctrine (reiterated in the epitome of Arius Didymus) that the reasoning power (τὸ βουλευτικόν) was supposedly weaker in women and absent from slaves (while not yet present in children).⁶² The political significance of Philo's alignment of sense perception with women emerges in Philo's deployment of Livia's benefactions to the temple in the *Embassy to Gaius*. Though I referred to this passage above, it deserves a fuller exposition here:

Availing herself of such an instructor in piety (ὁφηγητῇ τοιούτῳ τῆς εὐσεβείας), your grandmother Julia Augusta adorned the temple with

⁵⁹ Baer, *Philo's Use*, 45–64; see most recently Leslie Baynes, "Philo, Personification and the Transformation of Grammatical Gender."

⁶⁰ See the comments on Gen 3:1 and 3:13 in *QG* 1.33, 46, 47; *Opif.* 165; *Leg.* 3.59–64.

⁶¹ Cicero, *Mur.* 12.27: *mulieres omnis propter infirmitatem consili maiores in tutorum potestate esse voluerunt*. See Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law*, 51–54, cf. 25 and 47. Note the questions raised by the jurist Gaius (*ibid.*, 51; *Inst.* 1.190).

⁶² The text found in Stobaeus (*Flor.* 2.7.26; 2.149.5) describes a woman's reasoning as lesser or worse (χείρον, presumably than that of men); cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1260a9–14, where reasoning in a woman is described as present but ἄκυρον: without power or dysfunctional.

golden libation bowls and an abundance of other precious offerings. Under what impulse did she do so, since there was no image there? For women's judgments are weaker (ἀσθενέστεραι γάρ αἱ γνώμαι τῶν γυναικῶν), not being strong enough to grasp the intellectual apart from sense perceptible things (τῶν αἰσθητῶν). But she surpassed her whole kind in this as in all other things; by an education that prevailed untainted over nature and practice (ὑπὸ παιδείας ἀκράτου φύσει καὶ μελέτῃ),⁶³ she was made male in reason (ἀρρενωθεῖσα τὸν λογισμὸν; cf. 2 Macc 7:21), which became so sharpened that it grasped the intellectual better than the sensual and accounted the latter to be shadows of the former. (*Legat.* 319–20)

Like other women, Livia ought by nature to be identified with sense-perception. But her association with and instruction by Augustus have enabled her to transcend the trap of the senses and to act on the basis of true mind. Her gifts to the temple show the degree to which she excelled above other women, but at the same time her excellence is attributed to Augustus, specifically to his teaching. This *encomium* is double-edged; it illustrates both the problematic character of Livia's role in the imperial order (and the role of any woman in public contexts) and the attempt to address it by making clear that Livia did not act on her own initiative, but rather under the instruction of Augustus. The reading of gender characteristic of Philo's philosophical anthropology enables him to articulate and finesse this problem. But his solution is the standard solution of Roman propaganda. In the same vein, Ovid celebrated Livia's restoration of the shrine of Bona Dea as an imitation of her husband's vaunted restoration of temples (*Livia restituit, ne non imitata maritum esset et ex omni parte secuta suum*; *Fast.* 5.157–58). And much later Pliny would celebrate the virtues of Plotina and Marciana as imitation of Trajan (*Pan.* 83–84).

Philo's use of Gen 2:21 to ground the association of women with the house provides my second example of Philo reading Genesis through his philosophical categories and imperial sexual politics: "Why does Scripture call the likeness of the woman 'a building'?"

⁶³ Colson finds the phrase difficult and translates thus: "the purity of the training she received supplementing nature and practice" (LCL, n. a [10:160–61]). His concern seems to be consistency with respect to Philo's treatment of the trio of nature, practice and education, which requires excellence of nature and practice in that order. But he underestimates the degree to which this translation is consistent with Philo's highly coherent gender theory. Cf. Mattila's comments on the consistency of Philo's "gender gradient" ("Wisdom, Sense Perception, Nature," esp. 103, 129).

The harmonious coming together of man and woman and their consummation is figuratively like a house. And everything which is without a woman is imperfect and homeless. Thus, to a man is entrusted the public affairs of the state, while to a woman the affairs of the house are proper. The lack of her is ruin, but her being near at hand constitutes household management" (*QG* 1.26).⁶⁴ The traditions of rabbinic interpretation likewise relate the verb used to describe the woman to the long-established rabbinic identification of a woman or a wife with a house,⁶⁵ but this passage invokes the distinction between *politeia* and *oikonomia* articulated by Aristotle and resumed by Arius Didymus, perhaps specifically for Augustus's needs.⁶⁶ While the Aristotelian texts stress that both *politeia* and *oikonomia* are the responsibility of a man, Philo is closer to Xenophon, who divides household management into outdoor tasks that are allotted to men and indoor tasks that fall to women, both on account of the respective natures assigned to each by the deity (*Oec.* 7.22–31).⁶⁷ For Philo, moreover, divine will established the gendered division of *politeia* and

⁶⁴ This text is translated from the Armenian by Ralph Marcus (Philo Supplement; LCL). Cf. *Leg.* 2.38, which cites the text of Gen 2:21 (LXX) using the verb, but seems to interpret it as meaning "most proper" (ὀικειότατον).

⁶⁵ *Genesis Rabbah* begins a new chapter with the interpretation of the description of the creation of woman as "[God] built" (*wybn*). One interpretation deduces that *building* here refers to the addition of something that is absent from the front or side that becomes Adam. The commentary explains that God built extra chambers into Eve's form, so that she was broader than a man below in order to carry a child. Another explains that the woman has more understanding (*binah*) than the man and therefore can be married younger. Still another explains the word as showing that God plaited Eve's hair and brought her to Adam. This opinion is based on the use of a word using the consonants of "to build" for plaiting in the "sea-coast towns" (*Gen. Rab.* 18.1–3). Also see Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Transcribing Sexual Politics: Images of the Androgyne in Discourses of Antique Religion," in *Descrizioni e iscrizioni: politiche del discorso* (ed. C. Locatelli and G. Covi; Labirinti 32; Trento: Dipartimento di Scienze Filologiche e Storiche, 1998), 115–46. On the woman or wife as house, see Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 40–67; for a different view, see Cynthia M. Baker, "'Ordering the House': On the Domestication of Jewish Bodies," in *Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Body in Antiquity* (ed. M. Wyke; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 221–42.

⁶⁶ On this association, see David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 33–49. The authorship of Stobaeus's extracts has recently been contested, but see D. Brendan Nagle, "Aristotle and Arius Didymus on Household and ΠΟΛΙΣ," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 145 (2002): 198–223.

⁶⁷ Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* had been popularized in Rome in the preceding century by Cicero's translation and this material also appears in Columella, Philo's younger contemporary (*Re Rust.* 12; *Praef.* 1–8). Elsewhere, however, Philo treats household management as proper to the statesman (*Ios.* 38).

oikonomia, absorbing and transcending the *patrios mos* that excluded women from public participation in governance.⁶⁸

In *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, this gendered assignment of space and labor does not explicitly require the seclusion of women, but the division of *oikonomia* and *politeia* appears also in *On the Special Laws*, however, without reference to Gen 2:21: “The genre (εἶδος) of cities is twofold, of greater and lesser. The governance of the greater is allotted to men; its name is *politeia*; of the lesser, to women; its name is *oikonomia*” (*Spec.* 3.170). Here the division grounds the seclusion of women, with differing degrees of restriction for virgins and grown (or married) women apparently based in the structure of the classical Greek house (3.169). Philo sees this seclusion as the mark of the freeborn citizen woman (3.171). All of this is the long, slow wind-up to Philo’s exposition of Deut 25.11–12, which prohibits a woman from grabbing a man’s genitals to rescue her husband in a fight (apparently the ancient Hebrew equivalent of a knee—or high heel—to the groin). Philo is manifestly appalled by the prospect of any woman doing the like. He refers to the sequestration of Jewish women also in *Against Flaccus* (89), in which he laments the humiliation of women and girls who were dragged out of their seclusion in the Alexandrian riots. Elsewhere Philo also assumes or asserts the model of the classical Greek house, with its “men’s quarters” and “women’s quarters.”⁶⁹ Taylor provides a diagram of the house in Philo’s mind, partially based on a papyrus plan depicting a late Roman house from Oxyrhynchus.⁷⁰

What relation did this picture have to Jewish (or any) women in Roman Egypt? Although Philo’s financial status makes his owning an elaborate Greek house a real possibility, it is far from clear how such a house would have been used in the first century.⁷¹ Philo’s own work, like other sources from the period, raises questions about

⁶⁸ Cf. the following comment by Valerius Maximus: “What business has a woman with a public meeting? If ancestral custom be observed, none” (LCL); *Quid feminae cum contione? Si patrius mos servetur, nihil* (3.8.6).

⁶⁹ For example, see *Leg.* 3.98, as well as perhaps 3.40, but note that in neither of these instances is Philo interested in the gendered character of the space; he is merely listing the components of a proper house.

⁷⁰ Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers*, 267–24, and figs. 18 and 19 (*P. Oxy.* 2406).

⁷¹ By the first century, houses in Asia had already undergone reconstruction along the more open Roman lines. See Lisa Nevett, “Continuity and Change in Greek Households under Roman Rule,” in *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks: Studies in Cultural Interaction* (ed. E. N. Ostenfeld with K. Blomqvist and L. Nevett; Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity 3; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 81–97.

the relation of rhetoric and reality in his depiction of Jewish women of the period: in *Against Flaccus* itself, he relates that women are said to have been seized in the *agora* and the theater where they were dragged onto the stage. Some were released when it was discovered that they were not Jews—but apparently some in fact were Jews.⁷² Scholarship generally recognizes the disjuncture between Philo's claims and actual practice in first-century Alexandria and sees the seclusion he describes as an ideal, limited to the highest classes.⁷³ Niehoff relates this ideal to Philo's depiction of Jewish ἐγκράτεια. She also points to more overtly political aspects, suggesting that Philo wishes to distance Jewish women from Cleopatra, whom he depicts as a dangerous, ambitious and *Egyptian* woman. Against Cleopatra, she juxtaposes Seneca's aunt, of whom he boasts that, as wife of a Roman prefect of Egypt, over the course of sixteen years she "never was seen in public, received no provincial in her house, asked nothing from her husband and allowed nothing to be asked through her" (*Heb.* 19.6). Niehoff attributes this description to Seneca's desire to distance his aunt from the Egyptians and their "effeminate customs," making her an example of Roman ἐγκράτεια that, as Niehoff notes, Seneca seeks to inculcate.⁷⁴ At least as important for Seneca, and equally important for Philo, is the desire to distance her from any form of meddling in the politics of the imperial province. Like Livia, and also Seneca's aunt, the ideal Jewish women of Alexandria can be relied upon to remain in the sphere allotted to females by the divine word uttered at the creation of the world.

Thus, when Philo seeks to praise Livia for the extraordinary intellectual grasp of true piety that enables her to be his advocate for protecting the temple from pollution by Gaius's image, the philosophical anthropology, through which he consistently reads the creation account, comes to his aid in assuring that his praise will not transgress the limits of a woman's imperial status. And, when he

⁷² Pieter W. van der Horst notes that this detail seems to be out of place in the narrative and suggests either sloppiness or androcentrism as the explanation of the order, but the note may have been postponed simply because it flagrantly contradicts the picture of secluded Jewish women in *Flaccus* 89. See his *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 2; Leiden: Brill and Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 133, 164.

⁷³ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt from Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York: Schocken, 1984), 226–27; and Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers*, 270–72.

⁷⁴ Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity*, 104.

interprets the vocabulary of Gen 2:21 (LXX), he discovers in it the political philosophy that helped to drive imperial family values campaigns. Separating out “Jewish elements” from “Greek influence” and “Roman pressures” is therefore a thankless task.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

Philo’s work manifests the impact of Roman imperial family values on a wide range of issues that structure the deployment of gender. These include the use of εὐσέβεια to encompass not only the true worship and understanding of the deity, but also proper reverence for the emperor and devotion and duty toward one’s parents, family and associates; the primacy of the commandment against adultery and its absorption of all sexual transgressions; the criterion of procreativity as the measure of sex; the appearance of specifics that seem to derive from the Roman marriage laws; and a rereading of the creation narratives that grounds imperial sexual politics in divine will and philosophical anthropology. This is not to say that Philo advances Roman rather than Jewish values, nor is it clear to me that Philo should be read as promoting the Roman *imperium* to his Jewish contemporaries.⁷⁶ Except for a single brief reference, he speaks openly of Rome only in *Against Flaccus* and the *Embassy to Gaius*, two highly polemical works that aim to condemn Flaccus and Gaius by contrast with an idealized imperial past.⁷⁷ Older interpretation saw Philo as anti-Roman and neither an attempt to call the overlords to their better selves nor a desire to emulate and exceed the values they celebrate exclude deep resentment of and hostility toward imperial rule.⁷⁸ At no point does Philo simply reproduce the Roman laws or ideology; they are recast in the interest of the claims he makes for Judaism. Whether at some points he addresses the imperial order

⁷⁵ For an account of the collaboration of politics, exegesis and (to a lesser extent) philosophy in the gender prescriptions of 4 Maccabees and 1 and 2 Timothy, see D’Angelo, “Εὐσέβεια,” 147–62.

⁷⁶ Niehoff views his work in this light (see, e.g., *Philo on Jewish Identity*, 38–39).

⁷⁷ In *Prob.* 118–19, Philo praises the resistance of the Xanthians to Brutus, as one who had betrayed his leader and benefactor (Caesar).

⁷⁸ See John J. Collins’s measured discussion of Philo’s politics in his *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2d ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 131–38.

directly, while marshalling his Jewish compatriots to his side, or exhorts the Alexandrian Jews with the empire looking over his shoulder, Philo's primary concern is to ensure the survival of Judaism and the *politeia* of the Jews in Alexandria (and perhaps elsewhere) in a world mapped out by the power of imperial Rome. To do so, he demonstrates that the εὐσέβεια of the Jews produced (and itself even was) a form of "family values" that utterly separated them from the evil and effeminate Egyptians and, by the appropriate control of the internal others (women [especially] and the senses they represented, children and slaves), placed them by the side, if indeed not at the head, of their imperial masters in the *virtus* that enabled Rome to rule the world.

THE RHETORIC OF “MAGIC” IN EARLY CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE: GENDER, POWER AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF “HERESY”*

Kimberly B. Stratton

In his *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae*, Jerome narrates the story of a young virgin who is attacked by magic but eventually cured through the intervention of Hilarion. The aged saint is able to release the girl from a demon that has possessed her. According to Jerome’s account, a young man, who desired to seduce a consecrated virgin of the church, at first attempted to do so through the standard means of seduction: namely, “with touching, jokes, nods, whistles, and the rest” (*Vit. Hil.* 21.2670–75).¹ When that failed he went to Egypt to learn the art of magic. Upon returning, he cast a spell on the virgin through a method widely attested archaeologically: “he buried under the threshold of the girl’s house an instrument of torture, as one might say, made of words and monstrous figures carved onto a Cyprian plate” (21.2715–30).² As the story continues, the magic takes its intended effect: “On the spot, the virgin went insane, the cover of her head having been thrown aside, she tossed her hair about, gnashed her teeth, and called out the youth’s name. For you see, the magnitude of her affection had turned into a raving madness. As a consequence, having been led by her parents to the monastery and been handed over to the old man [St. Hilarion], shrieking continually the demon confessed” (*Vit. Hil.* 21.2735–65).

* An earlier version of this essay (“Male Magicians and Female Victims: Understanding a Pattern of Magic Representation in Early Christian Literature”) appeared in *lectio difficilior* 2 (2004): n.p.; online at: <http://www.iiav.nl/eazines/web/LectioDifficilior/2004/No2/lectio/stratton.htm>.

¹ The text of Jerome’s *Vita Hilarionis* is taken from William Abbott Oldfather, ed., *Studies in the Text Tradition of St. Jerome’s Vitae Patrum* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943). Unless noted otherwise, translations are my own.

² For similar examples and discussion, see John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 78–115; and Daniel Ogden, “Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 3–90.

This anecdote, written to demonstrate the sagely power and wisdom of St. Hilarion, also exemplifies a more widespread pattern of representation emerging in early Christian literature according to which men practice magic and women function as victims of male supernatural assault. While both men and women have been accused of practicing magic since at least the fifth century B.C.E., the stereotype of the dangerous female sorceress predominates in both Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. The question I seek to answer in this essay, therefore, is why certain early Christian writers do *not* enlist the stereotype of the dangerous female sorceress evident elsewhere, especially given the widespread rhetorical war on “heretical” movements, groups that supposedly favored women’s participation and leadership. Instead, like the story recounted at the outset, early Christian writings depict women consistently as *victims* of men’s magic rather than as magicians themselves.³ In an effort to understand this peculiarity of early Christian rhetoric, I will first provide a context for it by surveying depictions of magic from a variety of ancient non-Christian sources. Next, I will examine depictions of magic from diverse early Christian sources, drawing attention to the pattern of male magician and female victim that emerges throughout. Finally, I will consider the ideological function of “magic” in early Christian rhetoric and explore possible reasons why Christian writers gendered magic the way they did, wherein they depicted male rivals as predatory magicians and Christian women as foolish victims of magical seduction.

REPRESENTATIONS OF MAGIC IN ANCIENT LITERATURES

Beginning in the fifth century B.C.E. “magic” emerged as a discourse of alterity in Greek language and thought. Combining terminology for a Persian priest (μάγος) with terms for poisoning (φαρμακεία), curses (κατάδεσμοι) and incantation (ἐπωδή), “magic” operated as a semantic constellation vaguely designating practices regarded as un-Greek, antisocial, effeminate and dangerous.⁴ Much of this process occurred on the tragic stage through representations of “magic” as

³ Significantly, this phenomenon is not evidenced in those writings from the contemporaneous surrounding culture that caricature male magicians. See, for example, Lucian’s *Philopseudes* and Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* (esp. 2.12–14, 28).

⁴ I demonstrate this argument in Kimberly B. Stratton, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, and Stereotype in the Ancient World* (Gender, Theory and Religion; New York:

the dangerous practice of jealous women. In Euripides' *Medea*, for example, the main female character unleashes her destructive pharmaceutical skills on the new bride of her husband, Jason. Not only is Medea a jilted wife using magic (along with infanticide) to secure revenge, she is presented as a "barbarian," appearing in oriental costume to heighten the audience's sense of her foreignness and thus inhumanity.⁵ Similarly, in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, Heracles' wife Deianeira, whose name means "man-slayer" (inviting the audience to reflect on her life's *telos* even before the tragic story unfolds), also uses poison to rectify the situation of marital betrayal.⁶ In this case, however, Deianeira credulously believes she is using a *love* spell on her husband in order to win him back from the war bride he has brought home to replace her. Deianeira's naive belief that she is using a love potion when in fact she gives Heracles a fatal poison tragically underscores her unworldly credulity, which is the result of her being a "properly" sheltered Greek wife.⁷

Columbia University Press, forthcoming). Also see Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 27–33, who makes a similar argument.

⁵ See Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 35. In the first half of *Medea*, Euripides emphasizes Medea's human qualities: she is a vulnerable woman in exile, being unfairly mistreated by her ambitious husband. This characterization is overturned as Medea decides she must not only murder her rival but her own children as well.

⁶ Malcolm Davies, "Deianeira and Medea: A Foot-Note to the Pre-History of Two Myths," *Mnemosyne* 42 (1989): 469–72.

⁷ The "love" potion she believes she is giving Heracles is derived from the noxious combination of blood from the dying centaur Nessus (who was killed by Heracles for fondling Deianeira) and the poisonous blood of the Hydra, which Heracles uses to make his weapons more lethal. Deianeira was, thus, tragically naive in accepting Nessus's suggestion that she use this potent potion as a "love" spell. The degree to which Athenian women were sheltered is debated. It appears that while they were not sequestered from society, their participation in public events was largely restricted to festivals and sacred observances. The ideal for elite women was to restrict their contact with unrelated men by remaining within the domestic sphere. See W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), 113; J. P. Gould, "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens," *JHS* 100 (1980): 38–59 (46–51); David Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 149–54; Marilyn A. Katz, "Ideology and 'the Status of Women' in Ancient Greece," in *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (ed. R. Hawley and B. Levick; London: Routledge, 1995), 21–43; and idem, "Women and Democracy in Ancient Greece," in *Contextualizing Classics: Ideology, Performance, Dialogue* (ed. T. M. Falkner, N. Felson and D. Konstan; Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 41–68.

This theme of the jilted wife accidentally murdering her husband with a fatal love potion surfaces later in a fourth-century B.C.E. murder trial. In an extant forensic speech attributed to Antiphon (*In novercam*), a woman's step-son charges that she *deliberately* poisoned her husband, his father, while she claims that she was merely giving him a *love* potion.⁸ Other fourth-century writers similarly indicate a concern over women's use of *φαρμακεία* to harm their husbands, suggesting that in reality and/or in imagination Greek women were associated with the use of harmful potions for either love or death.⁹ In either case, their actions were seen to subvert male authority and sexual prerogative.¹⁰

Euripides' *Bacchae* also underscores the association of magic with dangerous women in its portrayal of Dionysos. When Dionysos first arrives in Thebes, he is described as a charlatan magician (γῶης ἐπῳδός), effeminately dressed and frolicking about with women in foreign and superstitious practices: "They say that some stranger, a charlatan magician (γῶης ἐπῳδός), has arrived from the land of Lydia, wearing long hair in fragrant blond curls, with wine-colored [cheeks], having the graces of Aphrodite in his eyes; that days and nights he passes in the company of young women, holding out before them the ecstatic cry of initiation" (*Bacch.* 233–38). In this characterization, Euripides draws on and reinscribes a number of important themes for understanding later Greek and Roman stereotypes of "magic." First, Dionysos is identified clearly as coming from Lydia in Asia Minor, a region identified with ecstatic foreign mysteries devoted to the Mother of the Gods.¹¹ Furthermore, he is described

⁸ The outcome of this trial does not survive and it is also not known whether this forensic speech was ever actually delivered in a court of law. Some scholars, for example, believe the speech was a declamatory piece, "a rhetorical exercise built on an imaginary case" (see Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 88–89).

⁹ See, for example, Euripides, *Ion* 616; Aristotle, *Magna moralia* 16 (= [Arist.] 1188b30–38); Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 139a; *Mulier. virt.* 256c. For an excellent discussion of the cases in which such a fear is expressed, see Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 322; and Christopher Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 110–19.

¹⁰ See Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 96–131.

¹¹ By contrast, Linear B tablets indicate that Dionysos was most likely worshipped in Greece as early as 1400 B.C.E., during the Minoan-Mycenaean era. See Robert Parker, "Greek Religion," in *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World* (ed. J. Boardman, J. Griffin and O. Murray; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 306–29 (309). Greek tradition and mythology, however, attributed foreign roots to him, which forms the basis of Euripides' *Bacchae*. Cf. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 151.

as wearing "oriental" dress, behaving in an effeminate way and cavorting with wild women.¹² Thus, throughout the play, Euripides juxtaposes this stereotype of the oriental Other with fears of dangerous foreign mysteries and women's lack of appropriate comportment, establishing associations between uncontrollable women and harmful magic.

In the beginning of the fourth century, Plato describes the practices of itinerant priests who offer initiations, heal people through purifications and sell curses (ἐπαγῶγαις καὶ καταδέσμοις; *Resp.* 364b–c). Similarly, the Hippocratic author of *On the Sacred Disease* castigates competitors who presume to draw upon divine power to heal people of epilepsy through dietary restrictions and purifications. He labels these men "magicians" (μάγοι) and "purifiers" (καθαρταί) as well as "beggars" (ἀγύρται) and "charlatans" (ἀλαζόνες) (*Morb. sacr.* 2.1–10).¹³ While in both of these cases the "magicians" in question appear to be male, the associations of magic with danger, foreignness and effeminacy suggests that these negative associations are motivating the charge of magic. With its unmanly and un-Greek connotations, the label "magician" therefore serves to delegitimize these competitors. Accordingly, accusations of "magic" appear in fourth-century invective, where they function as vague insinuations of dangerous and anti-social behavior rather than as specific assertions of illicit ritual practice (e.g., Demosthenes, *De corona* 276).

In Roman literature magic emerges more clearly as the practice of women.¹⁴ It also becomes viewed as more powerful (controlling cosmic forces and revivifying the dead) as well as more grotesque

¹² This depiction combines various aspects of the "barbarian" stereotype that was developing in fifth-century Attic drama. Persians, for instance, were displayed in Greek art as overly effeminate, living sumptuously and lacking "self-control" (σωφροσύνη)—in short, they epitomized all the characteristics shunned by Greek citizen men. See further Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, 81, 84–86. Also see Davina Lopez's essay in this volume.

¹³ Cf. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 47–48; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (trans. F. Philip; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 21–25, 30–35; and Jan N. Bremmer, "The Birth of the Term 'Magic,'" *ZPE* 126 (1999): 1–12 (3–4).

¹⁴ Magic appears in Roman literature in the first century B.C.E., after being introduced from Hellenistic sources. See further Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, 37–39; cf. Richard Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic," in Ankarloo and Clark, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, 159–275 (164–65); and Dickie, *Magic and Magicians*, 127. This observation holds notwithstanding the ban on harmful chants in the Twelve Tables. See James B. Rives, "Magic in the XII Tables Revisited," *CQ* 52 (2002): 270–90.

and demonic.¹⁵ “Witches” in Roman literature commit infanticide, cavort in cemeteries, practice necromancy and terrorize helpless men on whom their lustful desire has alighted.¹⁶ For example, Canidia in Horace’s eighth *Satire* (1.8.23–50) forages in a paupers’ cemetery, collecting body parts for use in necromantic rituals; in *Epode* 5 she and her compatriots murder a child to use his liver in a love potion. In Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Erichtho haunts the battle grounds of Rome’s destructive civil war, animating corpses, scooping out eyeballs and scraping flesh from crucifixes (538–46). These depictions of women’s magic augment an already existing discourse of wicked women that can be traced back at least as far as the late Roman Republic. Women such as Fulvia, Clodia and Sempronia are characterized as lustful, predacious and bloodthirsty.¹⁷ In the context of Roman invective, such women were demonized for overstepping the proper role of Roman matrons by interfering in male politics.¹⁸ They could also be attacked as an extension of their male family members, whose honor they helped uphold. For this reason, the use of magic as an accusation against women for political gain continued unabated into the imperial period, serving to remove imperial contenders. Under the Julio-

¹⁵ Some of these developments appear in the Hellenistic period. Hellenistic literature and art express a general interest in matters related to magic as well as to the exotic, grotesque and burlesque. See Barbara Hughes Fowler, *The Hellenistic Aesthetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 44–46, 66–69, 141–45. Medea, for example, wields almost cosmic power in Apollonius’s *Argonautica*. Nonetheless, Apollonius’s Medea is a sympathetic character: compelled by the force of Erōs (who has power even over Heracles and the gods), she struggles with her decision to betray her family. She also expresses genuine remorse and guilt over the murder of her brother. The sorceress in Theocritus’s *Idyll* 2 also appears in a sympathetic light; she has been seduced and abandoned by a womanizing Romeo. Her magic ritual thus appears justified in protecting her honor and wounded heart (on her identity as a courtesan, see Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 153–54; on the other hand, for a reading of Theocritus’s description of this girl as evidence for women’s emancipation in Alexandria, see Frederick T. Griffiths, “Home Before Lunch: The Emancipated Woman in Theocritus,” in *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* [ed. H. P. Foley; New York: Gordon & Breach Science, 1981], 247–74). In any case, neither Apollonius’s Medea nor Theocritus’s sorceress is depicted as cruel or demonic.

¹⁶ Daniel Ogden notes that the imperial period constitutes the “heyday” of Roman depictions of necromancy, suggesting that its importance as a discourse of alterity—amplifying the Otherness of the magician/witch—increased at this time (*Greek and Roman Necromancy* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001], 128).

¹⁷ On Fulvia, see Cicero *Phil.* 3.4; 5.22; Cassius Dio 35.3; 45.13.2; 47.8.4; and Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.4. On Clodia, see Marilyn B. Skinner, “Clodia Metelli,” *TAPA* 113 (1983): 273–87 with complete references. On Sempronia, see Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 24.2–25.4.

¹⁸ See Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 97.

Claudian dynasty nine women were tried on charges related to treason, poison and magic.¹⁹ In virtually every case the accusations were trumped up for political motive.²⁰

By the second century C.E. the stereotype of the lustful demonic "witch" was so deeply inscribed in peoples' imagination that Apuleius could mock it in his bawdy novel, the *Metamorphoses*.²¹ Numerous women in Apuleius's narrative employ magic to manipulate men's affection and attract lovers (1.8; 2.22; 3.17–18). In some cases they are quite cruel, murdering their victim or transforming him into an animal (1.9, 13). Interestingly, Apuleius himself was accused of using magic to seduce a wealthy widow (cf. the refutation in his *Apologia*), demonstrating clearly that accusations of magic were not restricted to women. Nonetheless, the powerful image of the demonic, blood-thirsty and lust-filled witch reinscribed itself with frequency in literature of the Roman imperial period, occupying the pages of satire, history, elegy and political invective.²² The stereotype of predatory sorceresses, for example, plays a prominent role in ideologically charged representations of Cleopatra following the civil war between Octavian and Antony. In these depictions, Antony appears as bewitched and beguiled by the magic of an evil foreign queen.²³ This image of Cleopatra as a seductive Oriental sorceress continues to shape modern imaginings of her in literature and pop-culture.²⁴

¹⁹ Elizabeth Ann Pollard, "Magic Accusations against Women in the Greco-Roman World from the First through the Fifth Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 133.

²⁰ Ibid., 129, 132.

²¹ The description of predacious "witches" in this novel are comic even while horrifying. Walter R. Johnson sees similar wit and sardonic humor in Lucan's depiction of Erichtho in his *Pharsalia* (*Momentary Monsters: Lucan and His Heroes* [Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 47; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987], 20–22).

²² For example, see Horace, *Epode* 5; *Satire* 8; Juvenal, *Satire* 6.82–84; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.69; 3.7, 17, 22; 4.22, 52; 12.65, 66; 16.8; Propertius 4.5.5–18; Tibullus 1.2.43–58; Ovid, *Metam.* 7; and Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.

²³ For example, see Plutarch, *Ant.* 37. This accusation that Cleopatra used φάρμακα and γοητεία to seduce and manipulate Antony functioned to vilify her in the Roman imagination and to justify Octavian's civil war against them. Furthermore, Octavian's propaganda machine transformed his own quest for power against a well respected and beloved Roman general and noble into a foreign war against an "oriental" Queen, spreading the tale that Cleopatra sought the destruction of Rome and the death of the empire: *dum Capitolio/regina dementis ruinas/funus et imperio parabat* (Horace, *Carm.* 1.37.6–8).

²⁴ For example, in the 2004 film *Augustus* (originally a three-part television miniseries re-released by Columbia Tristar Home Video) the character Cleopatra laments her sullied image as a seductive sex-kitten even while parading around in transparent gauze toga-negligees. The filmmaker here shows an astute awareness of ancient invective but, nonetheless, is beholden to the traditional image of Cleopatra as *femme fatale*.

The second-century C.E. writer Lucian of Samosata exhibits a rare skepticism by deriding magic, magicians and those who credulously follow them in several of his satires. For example, in *Alexander the False Prophet* he mocks an Asclepius cult allegedly established for personal profit by a man named Alexander. Lucian chastises Alexander as a false prophet and fraud, accusing him of chicanery. His depiction presents Alexander in the guise of a charlatan magician similar to ones Plato describes. Yet it appears that Alexander gained a great reputation and large following.²⁵ Clearly, for some people, Alexander's "magic" was "miracle" and his healings were effective. Despite this widespread popularity, or maybe even because of it, Lucian used the range of ancient stereotypes to denigrate Alexander.

Alongside this repertoire of images related to cynical mockery of divine mediators, another resource for understanding the background to the early Christian use of magic stereotyping is, of course, the biblical/Jewish tradition. The Hebrew Bible often associates magic or forbidden religious practices and "idolatry" with women. Exodus 11:17, for example, proscribes the practice of magic (כִּישּׁוֹף) and condemns the practitioner to death. Interestingly, the word for "magician" in this passage appears in the feminine form (מְכַשֶּׁפֶת), suggesting that primarily women engage in magic (see the discussion below). In his redaction of Joshua-2 Kings, the Deuteronomistic Historian similarly blames the women (specifically foreign queens) for the introduction of foreign deities into Judah and Israel. It is not by accident, then, that Jezebel emerges as the paradigmatic evil queen of biblical literature; according to the biblical narrative, she not only supports Baal worship, but she persecutes the prophets of Yahweh as well (1 Kings 19:2-3). At her death, she is ascribed with polluting the land with her "sorceries" (כְּשָׁפִידָה; 2 Kings 9:22).

Writings from the Second Temple period and later perpetuate this association between women and magic. For example, elaborating on the story of the fallen angels from Genesis 6:1-2, texts such as 1 *Enoch* (6.1; 19.1), *Testament of Reuben* (5.1, 5-6), *Jubilees* (4.22; 5.1), 2 *Baruch* (56.10), *Tobit* (6.14; 8.3) and Josephus's *Antiquities* (1.73)

²⁵ For further discussion, see Erik Gunderson's essay in this volume. It is noteworthy that the New Testament documents similar accusations of charlatanry lodged against Jesus during his ministry. In a further development, according to his detractors, Jesus' powers were derived from demons or Satan. For an in-depth analysis, see Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 21-44.

describe how the angels mingled sexually with human women and taught them various forbidden arts, among which magic figures prominently. In rabbinic literature women also often figure as magicians. For instance, an anonymous Tanna in the Babylonian Talmud comments on the prohibition of magic in Exod 11:17, arguing that the ban is gendered "because most women engage in magic" (מפני שרוב נשים מצויות בכשפים; *b. Sanh.* 67b).²⁶ The association of women with magic recurs in other Tannaitic statements as well. For example, Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai forbids picking up bread left by the side of the road because women may have used it for magic (*b. 'Erub.* 64b). Similarly, Rabbi Yosi states that it is not necessary to say a blessing over the sweet smell of incense wafting from a nearby town because the daughters of Israel burn incense for magic (*b. Ber.* 53a). In this passage, not only women in general but Jewish women specifically are indicted as practitioners of magic. These statements suggest the existence of a discourse among at least some rabbis (contemporary with early Christian writings) that strongly linked women with magical practice.²⁷

This brief discussion of representations of magic in non-Christian sources provides a basic context for understanding how early Christian writers drew on, reinscribed, but also altered and subverted, the discourse of magic they inherited from the surrounding cultures. It is to an examination of these depictions that I now turn.

EVIDENCE FOR A CHRISTIAN PATTERN OF MAGIC REPRESENTATION

In the earliest Christian writings magic emerges strongly as a discourse of alterity, helping define boundaries and forge identities. The Apocalypse of John, for example, attributes to outsiders (non Christians but also other Christians of whom the author does not approve) various practices, including magic, fornication and idolatry, using these charges to distinguish "saints" from "sinners," the "redeemed" from the "damned," "us" from "them." In dualistic language characteristic of apocalyptic literature, John's Apocalypse paints the world in

²⁶ This explanation may not reflect a rabbinic ideology as much as the exigencies of justifying the gendered formulation in Exodus.

²⁷ For a more nuanced discussion of magic in rabbinic texts, see Kimberly B. Stratton, "Imagining Power: Magic, Miracle, and the Social Context of Rabbinic Self-Representation," *JAR* 73 (2005): 361–93.

stark binary terms: “you are either with us or against us.” Among his primary targets is Rome, depicted as a rapacious whore who deceives all the nations with her sorcery (φαρμακεία) and devours the blood of the saints (18:23–24). This harlot Babylon represents virtually the only female figure in early Christian literature to be accused of practicing magic. Interestingly, it is not a human female but an entire empire that stands accused and whose worship was later dismissed as nothing more than veneration of demons.²⁸

The Acts of the Apostles frequently employs “magic” as a foil to demonstrate the superior power of Christ and his apostles over against competitors (usually male), whose power derives from demons.²⁹ For example, according to the narrative, Simon Magus amazed the Samaritans with acts of magic (ταῖς μαγείαις; 8:11) until converted to Christianity by the missionary Philip (8:13). Later in the narrative Simon tries to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit, mistaking “miracle” for “magic” and demonstrating a fundamental greediness for power (Acts 8:18–19).³⁰ The author of Acts next levels the accusation of “magic” against other male competitors: Elymas (who is an adviser to the proconsul; 13:7) and the sons of Sceva (who is a Hebrew priest; 19:14).³¹ In both of these encounters, the men accused of “magic” belong to socially recognized groups with authority (government advisers and the Hebrew priesthood). The accusation of

²⁸ See further Chris Frilingos’s essay in this volume. In a similar vein, Justin inveighs against the worship of idols in his *First Apology*, stating that idols are made in the image of demons (9). In his *Second Apology* (5), he draws on the biblical account of the fallen angels (Gen 6:1–2) embellished in Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings in order to explain away belief in polytheistic deities. Greek and Roman gods are thus none other than these demonic offspring reported in the Bible, enslaving human beings through “magic” (φαρμακεία) and beguiling people into worshipping them as deities (1 *Apol.* 14). Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 22–23, for a similar argument. Also see Jennifer Knust’s essay in this volume.

²⁹ See Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 37–61.

³⁰ Greed is an attribute typically associated with magicians. See Andy Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (JSNTSup 235; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 116, 243.

³¹ Contra Reimer, *Miracle and Magic*, 76–77, who argues that “legitimate” intermediaries in Hellenistic literature cultivate fringe status by abandoning money, family and careers, traveling as itinerant preachers and disregarding personal safety and security. Thus, according to Reimer, “official” ritual practitioners are regarded as suspect because of their institutional status. For further discussion of this interpretation, see Kimberly B. Stratton, review of Andy Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, *JBL* 122 (2003): 767–71.

"magic" against these men, therefore, operates as a form of corrosive discourse—it challenges social expectations about who legitimately wields power and who has access to the divine.³² In another passage bearing on Christian representations of magic and women, Paul and Silas arrive in Macedonia where they encounter a female slave who possesses a Pythian spirit (ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα). She follows them around, proclaiming them to be "servants of the Most High God" (δούλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; 16:17). Annoyed by her intrusion, Paul casts out her spirit (πνεῦμα), leaving her owners dismayed at the loss of their source of income (16:19). In this episode, the mantic slave may resemble a woman with magical powers.³³

In the second century, heresiologists drew on and greatly expanded upon the description of Simon from Acts, identifying Simon with "Gnosticism" and labeling him the "father of all heresy."³⁴ This identification served to delegitimize competing practices by associating

³² Bruce Lincoln describes "corrosive" speech as those types of discourse that undermine authority indirectly, surreptitiously and insidiously (*Authority: Construction and Corrosion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], 78). He includes in this class of speech such categories as gossip, catcalls, caricatures, graffiti, lampoon and curses. These forms of speech constitute the discourse of the lower classes and those lacking sufficient power (or courage) to stand up to authority and to voice their opposition openly. Thus, even among members of the aristocracy, corrosive discourse could be used to undermine the legitimacy of an emperor or governor by calling into question that person's moral rectitude. Corrosive discourse thus functions where a power differential prevents one person or social group from freely expressing their discontentment without fear of reprisal and is therefore not necessarily limited to certain social classes.

³³ It is interesting to note, however, that she possesses a Pythian spirit, associated with the Delphic oracle of Apollo, and not a demon. Shelly Matthews argues, for example, that the language indicates that the slave is not someone "possessed" by evil spirits (as reported of people in the Gospels) but rather is suggestive of her status as a prophet/missionary of Apollo. She represents, therefore, the "old" gods over whom Paul's God triumphs ("Elite Women, Public Religion, and Christian Propaganda in Acts 16," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* [ed. A.-J. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; FCNTECW 9; New York: T&T Clark International and Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004], 111–33 [127–30, esp. 129]). It is possible, however, that Luke may have associated Greek and Roman gods with demons already (cf. n. 28 above), although this is not clear. In any case, the girl does not use her power to pursue her own desires as sorceresses are depicted as doing. Rather, she is a slave, whose possession of the spirit serves her masters, who are explicitly characterized as greedy—so by association the trope extends to them rather than the girl.

³⁴ The category "Gnosticism" is problematic. See Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Nevertheless, I will continue to use it, not as a heuristic category but as an emic definition employed by the ancient authors I am considering. Luke does not mention Gnosticism, although his reference to Simon's grand

them with “magic” and a greed for power (“simony”). Writing around 150 C.E., Justin Martyr claims that Simon was worshipped as a god in Rome where they erected a statue of him on the Tiber river.³⁵ Justin also describes a woman named Helena who functions as Simon’s consort; Justin attributes theological significance to her, describing this woman as Simon’s *ἔννοιαν πρώτην* or “First Thought.” It is difficult to determine how much Justin embellishes his description and how much what he presents is historically reliable, since none of his account accords with the picture of Simon in Acts, where he appears as a mere “magician.”³⁶ What is clear is that a new figure, Helena, appears as Simon’s theological compatriot; she holds an important position in “Simonian” soteriology according to this portrait. Despite Helena’s supposed importance and centrality, Simon alone is designated as the “magician.” Irenaeus, for example, in his *Adversus haereses*, credits Helena with an important but demoralizing place within Simon’s mythic system:

Moreover, Simon of Samaria, from whom all heresies derive (*haereses substituerunt*), uses material of such a kind in the formulation of his sect:

title—“Great” (Μεγάλη; Acts 8:10)—could suggest the cosmological role later here-siologists ascribed to him. It could just as easily, however, be a Samaritan messianic designation (identified with the Samaritan “messiah” or *Ta’eb*) or, if Simon is a Gentile from Samaria, the title of a miracle-working divine man according to Hellenistic fashion. The second earliest references to Simon (in Justin, *1 Apol.* 26; *Dial.* 120.6) also do not associate him with Gnosticism, reinforcing the idea that this was a later aspersion. Cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (trans. J. Limburg et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 63; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 307; and Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 60–61.

³⁵ Justin reports that under Claudius the Senate and the Roman people were so strongly influenced by Simon’s magic that on Tiber Island they erected a statue to him with the inscription SIMONI DEO SANCTO (*1 Apol.* 26). An inscription found on the island in 1574 actually reads: SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO—a dedication to a god of oaths, heaven, thunder and lightning. It may have been related to a shrine of Jupiter and, since Simonians were accustomed to identify Simon with this god, they may have attributed the inscription to him, an interpretation which Justin presumably learned from them. Hence, much of what Justin says about Simon may have derived from Simonians in Rome and not from Samaria. See Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 74.

³⁶ Some have argued that Luke downgrades Simon to a mere “magician,” eschewing any larger messianic or divine claims he may have made (see Haenchen, *Acts of the Apostles*, 307; and Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 66). Most scholars accept Justin’s account as historically reliable, noting that in Justin as well as in Luke Simon is not identified with Gnosticism but is regarded as a widely popular and influential religious figure. See Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, 74; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 63; and Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, 58–60.

a certain woman, Helena, whom he delivered from prostitution in Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, and used to lead around with him, claiming her to be the First Conception of his mind, Mother of All, through whom in the beginning he conceived in his mind to create the angels and archangels. Indeed, this Ennoia springing forth from him, understanding what her father desired, descended to the regions below and generated angels and powers by whom he declared that this world was made.³⁷

In the ensuing passages, Irenaeus describes Helena’s “fall” and enslavement in human form along lines that resemble the well-known Sophia myth from “Gnostic” sources such as the *Apocryphon of John*. Helena is subject to Simon as his “First Thought” (ἐννοίαν πρώτην) and he is said to be her source and savior. Although she is accorded a prominent place in Simon’s soteriological cosmology, Helena is portrayed as Simon’s subordinate and side-kick—she accompanies him to demonstrate *his* soteriological power. Thus, he alone receives the designation μάγος.

A later portrait of Simon Magus in Hippolytus’s *Refutatio omnium haeresium* depicts the relationship between Simon and Helena as objectifying if not a little victimizing: “Immediately after having purchased her release, he would lead her around with him, asserting this to be the lost sheep and proclaiming himself to be the Power (δύναμιν) above all things. But the false man, falling in love with this woman (Helena as she is called), purchased her for himself to possess and, being ashamed of this with respect to his students, fabricated this story (μῦθον)” (*Haer.* 6.19.4). According to this account, Simon purchases Helena to be his sexual servant and to demonstrate his soteriological capabilities. By depicting Simon as a lewd swindler, Hippolytus’s portrait of Simon combines elements of sexual slander with accusations of “magic” and “heresy” in a potent rhetorical cocktail. In all these examples, it is Simon who alone is labeled as a μάγος while Helena always appears as victimized and dependent—never as a magician herself. While this may reflect the historic “reality” to a certain extent, as some scholars may choose to argue, this type of relationship emerges as a pattern in early Christian writings, suggesting that it is (also) a rhetorical trope. This characterization

³⁷ *Haer.* 23.2. The Greek text for this section has been lost; the text’s reconstruction relies on Old Latin and fragments from Syriac and Armenian. See the text in Norbert Brox, ed., *Epideixis. Adversus Haereses. Darlegung der Apostolischen Verkündigung. Gegen die Häresien I* (Fontes Christiani 8.1; Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 290. For a comparable use of women in Lucian’s *Alexander or The False Prophet*, see Erik Gunderson’s essay in this volume.

should not be read simply as descriptive, therefore, but should also be examined for its ideological import.

In shifting from Simon to his supposed protégé Marcus, we observe heresiological attacks that more clearly demonstrate the accusatory pattern in which a man is charged with practicing magic and women are portrayed as his victims. For example, Irenaeus lodges an accusation of “magic” against Marcus to explain away his apparently considerable charisma:

But another one among the aforementioned [heretics], Marcus by name, proclaims himself to be better than his teacher, the most adept in magical chicanery (μαγικῆς κυβείας), and through this method he has beguiled many men and not a few women and made them cleave to him as to someone who is the most knowledgeable and most perfect, one who possesses the greatest power from the invisible and ineffable realms; thus he is truly the precursor of the Antichrist. For combining the trickery of Anaxilaus with the villainy of the so-called Magi, he is imagined by those who have no sense and are out of their minds to accomplish miracles (δυνάμεις ἐπιτελεῖν) through these means. (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 13.1)

To further delegitimize Marcus, he follows this accusation of magic with allegations of sexual deviance and of appealing to “foolish” women: “Furthermore, that this man, Marcus, produced love potions (φίλτρα) and attraction spells (ἀγωγήμα) with which to insult the bodies of some of the women, if not all, has been confessed in full by women who often return to the Church of God and [admit] their body to have been corrupted by him and to have loved him with a consuming passion” (*Haer.* 7.4.1–6). Irenaeus portrays Marcus here as a sexual predator, suggesting a contrast between the chastity of women in the “true” church—which is under the protection of legitimate bishops—and the sexual promiscuity and deviancy of Marcus’s community.³⁸

The use of sexual slander to malign Marcus mirrors Irenaeus’s primary source of concern: the presence of women and their prominent place in Marcus’s movement. Irenaeus expends most of his attack on Marcus railing against the use of female prophets. Yet, despite the apparently prominent role of women in Marcus’s *ekklēsia*,

³⁸ See Virginia Burrus, “The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome,” *HTR* 84 (1991): 229–48, who describes the sexually permissive “heretical woman” as the polar opposite of the “orthodox female virgin” (232). The former leaves “all the gateways of her body unguarded” while the latter remains obediently silent, closing her mouth as well as her genitals.

these females are never accused of being magicians themselves, but rather are depicted as victims of Marcus's magic.

It is remarkable that these heresiological writings consistently enlist "magic" as an accusation against male competitors but not their female followers or colleagues; these women are rather portrayed as the victims of magic. A similar pattern emerges in hagiographical narratives such as the second-century apocryphon the *Acts of Andrew*, which also narrates a story of magical attack in which the magician is represented as a sexually predatory male and the victim as a female. The story begins with four soldiers surrounding the apostle Andrew and his followers. One of the soldiers, possessed by a demon, suddenly shouts out and falls down, foaming at the mouth. Andrew, empowered by the Holy Spirit, divines the poor man's situation as follows:

This young man, who is (so) tormented in his body, has a sister, a virgin (παρθένος), who is a great ascetic (πολιτευτής) and champion (ἀθλητής). Truly I say, she is near to God because of her purity and her prayers and her alms. Now, to relate it briefly, there was somebody near to her house who was a great magician. It happened one day thus: at the time of evening the virgin went up on her roof to pray. The young magician saw her praying. Semmath entered into him to contend against this great champion. The young magician said within himself: "If I have spent five and twenty years under the instruction of my master until I was trained in this skill (τέχνη), this (then) is the beginning of my craft (τέχνη): should I not be stronger than this virgin, I shall not be able for any work." And the young magician conjured up great powers against the virgin, and sent them after her. But when the demons came to tempt her or (even) to persuade her, they took the form of her brother and knocked at the door. And she arose and went down to open the door, since she thought that it was her brother. But first she prayed earnestly, so that the demons became like [...] and fled away. [...] .³⁹

According to this narrative, the young magician sees a consecrated virgin praying on her roof and, like David desiring Bathsheba, he seeks to possess her. Using magic, he summons a demon, Semmath, who enters into him and, using his demonic power, he conjures greater powers to control the virgin. Based on the familiar pattern of the ancient ἀγωγή spells, it would seem that the magician sought

³⁹ *Acts Andr.* 5–39. Translation of the Coptic (P. Coptic Utrecht 1) is taken from Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. and trans. R. McL. Wilson et al.; 2 vols.; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991–1992), 2:124–25.

to have these demons bring her to him.⁴⁰ However, the virgin possessed a power stronger than the magician—she was a “great ascetic (πολιτευτής) and champion (ἀθλητής)” who had drawn “near to God because of her purity and her prayers and her alms” (*Acts Andr.* 6–11). She transforms herself through ascetic rigor into the paradigms of masculine power and civic accomplishment—namely a champion (ἀθλητής) and statesman (πολιτευτής)—transcending the “natural” weakness and subordination of her gender. The virgin is thus able to overcome the magician’s demonic retinue with the power of her spiritual charisma.

Other apocryphal writings similarly depict men’s use of magic to seduce virtuous women. In these stories, however, it is apostles who are accused of using magic to seduce women away from marriage and toward Christian conversion. In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, for example, Thecla’s fiancé accuses Paul of bewitching young women with magic; Thecla has become so enthralled by Paul’s teaching that she desires to do nothing but follow him and call off her betrothal to a prominent young citizen (*Acts of Paul* 3.15). The “joke” in this narrative seems to be the “insider” knowledge that Paul is bewitching Thecla not with magic, but with the power of the gospel message. Nonetheless, this narrative evidences the trope of men using magic to seduce young women, one which rarely occurs in Roman or Jewish writings.⁴¹

INTERPRETING GENDER IN EARLY CHRISTIAN DEPICTIONS OF MAGIC

By way of introduction to this next section, I begin by drawing attention to the correspondence between the portrayal of women as victims of men’s magic and the archaeological record, in which the vast majority (that is, approximately 86%) of erotic binding spells are performed by men on women.⁴² These spells often involve torturing

⁴⁰ See Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 55–69; and the comic example of the inflated wine skins in Apuleius, *Metam.* 3.18.

⁴¹ Euripides’ *Bacchae*, of course, presents Dionysos in a similar vein: as a foreign magician-charlatan (γόνης ἐπιδόξ) who bewitches the women of Thebes, driving them into the woods like wild animals. The tragic joke in that play also revolved around the audience’s knowledge that Dionysos is actually divine and is intent on using his power as a god to exact revenge on the royal house of Thebes for shaming his mother and rejecting his divinity.

⁴² See Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 43 n. 9.

figurines of the female-victim and enlisting the spirits of the restless dead to compel her, through physical discomfort, to come to the male petitioner and unite with him sexually.⁴³ An excellent example of such a spell is a female figurine, now at the Louvre, found bound and kneeling, pierced by thirteen nails,⁴⁴ which corresponds almost exactly to a recipe from the Greek Magical Papyri (PGM IV.335–84). In Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae*, with which I began this essay, the description of the virgin's response to her assailant's magic mirrors the results expected by these types of magic spells—"the virgin went insane . . . she tossed her hair about, gnashed her teeth, and called out the youth's name. For you see, the magnitude of her affection had turned into a raving madness" (*Vit. Hil.* 21.2735–55).

The material evidence for magic, pointing as it does toward women's victimization and male predatory sexuality, may therefore suggest that Christian depictions of magic reflect "reality," whereas the common stereotype of the female witch and male victim deviates from historical practice. I hope to show in the following discussion, however, that, while the depiction of female victims and male magicians may mirror the material evidence for magical practice, this alone cannot serve to explain fully the portrait of magic in early Christian literature. Rather, I intend to illustrate that Christian depictions are as ideologically informed in their portrayal of magic and use of gender as those representations that categorically malign women as "witches." As ideological vignettes, early Christian representations of magic reveal something not so much about the historical practice of magic in antiquity (although they may do that also) but about the rhetorical use of "women" in early Christian discourse, especially in the struggle to define "heresy" and establish forms of "legitimate" Christianity.

Irenaeus, for example, depicts Marcus deceiving silly women into believing that they can possess the prophetic spirit through the reception of his grace (χάρις). Irenaeus caricatures one of Marcus's female followers thus: "But she, filled with conceit, and too easily cajoled by these pronouncements, with her spirit heated from the expectation that she herself is about to prophesy and her heart racing to the requisite degree, boldly ventures to babble every frivolous thing

⁴³ See John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 1990), 71–98; Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 55–69; and Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 81, 85–86, 92–106, 108–10.

⁴⁴ See Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells*, 98 fig. 13.

that happens to occur to her in a vacuous and presumptuous manner, just as from someone heated with an empty wind" (*Haer.* 7.2.41–46). Dismissing the woman's prophecy as "frivolous babble" (λαλεῖν ληρώδη και τὰ τυχόντα πάντα) from an "empty wind" (κενοῦ πνεύματος), Irenaeus alleges that the woman offers Marcus both her possessions and her body in gratitude for her prophetic gift. Thus, according to Irenaeus, she is victimized sexually as well as spiritually by Marcus (tricked into believing she can possess the Holy Spirit). Furthermore, according to this logic, the prophetic openness of Marcus's female followers corresponds to their sexual looseness.⁴⁵ Such invective undermines not only Marcus, but the prophetess as well. Her charisma and message are shown to be empty and foolish, purchased cheaply with her immodest body. By concentrating his vitriolic attack on Marcus's "seduction" of "silly" women rather than on any real doctrinal deviation, Irenaeus suggests that, apart from women's participation in the "heretical" Eucharist, Marcus's teaching itself does not violate "orthodox" Christian doctrine. The issue seems rather to be one of praxis—women's participation in the Eucharist and possession by the Holy Spirit—not of theology.⁴⁶ Irenaeus thus effectively silences the women by portraying them as foolish victims.

Returning again to the narrative of magical attack in Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae*, the story Jerome narrates is similar to the one in the *Acts of Andrew* but has a different outcome and resultant ideological message. In Jerome's account, the virgin falls victim to the magic, reacting exactly as ancient ἀγωγή spells intended their victims to respond—that is, the girl goes mad with desire for the

⁴⁵ Cf. Burrus's comments in this respect: "Just as she allows herself to be penetrated sexually by strange men, so too . . . she babbles forth new theological formulations . . ." ("Heretical Woman," 232).

⁴⁶ The issue of women's participation operated also in the condemnation of other so-called "heresies," such as Montanism and Carpocratianism. See, for example, Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Todd Breyfogle, "Magic, Women, and Heresy in the Late Empire: The Case of the Priscillianists," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (ed. M. Meyer and P. Mirecki; RGRW 129; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 435–54; and Burrus, "Heretical Woman." Also see Francine Cardman, "Women, Ministry, and Church Order in Early Christianity," in *Women and Christian Origins* (ed. R. Shepard Kraemer and M. R. D'Angelo; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 300–29; and Susanne Heine, *Women and Early Christianity: A Reappraisal* (trans. J. Bowden; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 130–46.

magician and exhibits signs of possession.⁴⁷ This narrative contrasts sharply with the one from *Acts of Andrew*, despite the nearly identical plot of seducing virgins through magic: while the *Acts of Andrew* portrays the virgin as powerful and self-reliant—she is able to fend off the demons through her great spiritual power (described in terms associated with masculine civic virtue and the ability to govern)—the virgin in Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae* depends on the Saint to release her. Furthermore, the saint accuses her of being *responsible* for her own attack: Hilarion "rebuked her, for she had committed such [acts] through which she had enabled the demon to enter" (*Vit. Hil.* 21.2890–95).

The virgin's lack of spiritual power and ability to defend herself in Jerome's account reflects an ideology in which women, even ascetical virgins, were not regarded as possessing sufficient spiritual merit to resist such attacks. Jerome's narrative uses the story of the girl's demonic possession (read: penetration) to reinscribe the familiar stereotype of foolish, weak and easily seduced women.⁴⁸ She functions like the women seduced by Marcus, demonstrating that women are liable to hysteria and uncontrollable lust, despite her spiritual piety and even *askesis*. In fact, this narrative could be read as an antidote to the message conveyed in *Acts of Andrew*, where a girl is shown to possess great spiritual merit through control of her own sexuality. In Jerome's narrative, power resides strictly with authorized men associated with "orthodox" institutions, such as the monastery. Unlike

⁴⁷ See Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic*, 43–55; and Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*. Also see Christopher Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera* (ed. C. Faraone and D. Obbink; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3–32; idem, "Aphrodite's KESTOS and Apples for Atalanta: Aphrodisiacs in Early Greek Myth and Ritual," *Phoenix* 44 (1990): 224–43; and idem, "Clay Hardens and Wax Melts: Magical Role-Reversal in Vergil's Eighth Eclogue," *CP* 84 (1989): 294–300, all of which examine issues of power and violence in ancient *ἀγωγή* spells.

⁴⁸ Gail Corrington Streete traces the long-standing association in Greek and Roman thought between women's sexual penetration and prophetic ability ("The 'Divine Woman?' Propaganda and the Power of Celibacy in the New Testament Apocrypha: A Reconsideration," in *Women in Early Christianity* [ed. D. Scholer; Studies in Early Christianity 14; New York: Garland, 1993], 169–82 [172–73]). Corrington Streete notes Chrysostom's reference to Lucan, who in turn attributes the Pythia's prophecy to her "being raped by the god" (*Bell. civ.* 5.166). On women's foolishness and susceptibility to hysteria, see Margaret MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2–4. For similar themes in Tertullian, see Brad Windon's essay in this volume.

the *Acts of Andrew*, Jerome does not depict the virgin as a powerful ascetic, practicing her devotion independent of church authorities. Her lack of power and her susceptibility to seduction provide a foil for demonstrating the power of male monks and the institutions of “orthodox” authority. This virgin’s failure thus reinscribes female sexual weakness and men’s power to control them.

Through their opposing resolutions of the story, these two narratives of magical seduction reveal competing ideologies of power and female spiritual autonomy.⁴⁹ In one, asceticism is portrayed as powerful while in the other only authorized male monks can defeat demons; women, even ascetic virgins, require male custody and protection. In both cases, “magician” and “virgin” serve as tropes in debates over spiritual authority. Neither story illuminates the historical reality of being a “virgin,” a “woman” or of practicing “magic.”

READING “WOMEN” IN EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITING

In the early years of feminist biblical scholarship narratives about women were largely read for the “evidence” they could provide regarding women and their roles in early Christian communities. Then a reclamation movement arose that strove to reconstruct women’s forgotten “history.”⁵⁰ In this context, Bernadette Brooten among others recognized the difficulty of using men’s accounts to reconstruct

⁴⁹ Virginia Burrus argues that the apocryphal Acts originated as folk-tales in a female milieu; as such, they reflect women’s interests and self-perception (*Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* [Studies in Women and Religion 23; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1987]). If true, this would help account for the divergent representations of the two virgins—the first successful, the second victimized. Elizabeth A. Castelli insightfully points out, however, that “the ideology of virginity” was equivalent to the “ideology of marriage” in that both commodified women’s sexuality and used it as an object in social or spiritual trade (“Virginity and Its Meaning for Women’s Sexuality in Early Christianity,” *JFSR* 2 [1986]: 61–88). While virginity may have afforded women some degree of social freedom, it did so at the expense of women’s identity and sense of selfhood by calling for a rejection of their inferior “feminine” nature.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); idem, “Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities,” in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. R. Ruether and E. McLaughlin; New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 29–70; Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); and Anne Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women* (trans. O. C. Dean Jr.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

women's lives. For this reason, she directed scholars of women's history to shift the focus of their study from what ancient men had to say about women to the evidence for women's actual lives.⁵¹ She pointed out the problem of using men's accounts to reconstruct women's experience; the result was to perpetuate the marginalization of ancient women by continuing to focus on men's opinions and perceptions of them. This type of investigation, she noted, "lends itself to women being treated as a literary motif and to a confusion between images of women in . . . literature and the history of . . . women."⁵² In response, Brooten advocated a "shift in categories" that would situate women at the center of the investigative frame and search out details of their lives—distinguishing between classes, ethnicities, locations and time periods—to reconstruct the "pre-history" of women.⁵³ In the period since her essay appeared, much excellent scholarship has done just what Brooten suggested, with the result that a great deal more is known about the social factors that shaped some women's lives in various social situations, times and places in antiquity.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Bernadette J. Brooten, "Early Christian Women and Their Cultural Context: Issues of Method in Historical Reconstruction," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed. A. Yarbro Collins; Biblical Scholarship in North America 10; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 65–91.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 66–67, 80.

⁵⁴ The enormous amount of quality feminist scholarship that deepens our understanding of women's lives in the ancient world exceeds my ability to cover adequately in a footnote. Of special note is Ross Shepard Kraemer's sourcebook (*Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons, Monastics: A Sourcebook on Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988]), recently republished with new additions and commentary as Ross Shepard Kraemer, ed., *Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), which compiles evidence for a variety of women's lives in different ethnic communities, economic classes and social locations from both literary and non-literary sources across the ancient Mediterranean world. Also see the work by classicists in this vein, especially Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, eds., *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982). On women's lives in Rome, see Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Judith P. Hallett, *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). On women's lives in both Greece and Rome, see Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1995). For Greek women's lives and experiences, see Keuls, *Reign of the Phallus*; Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Helen King, "Medical Texts as a Source for Women's History," in *The Greek World*

In recent years, however, the hermeneutical climate has begun to shift increasingly away from historical “reconstruction,” a task which is difficult at best, to an appreciation of the ideology and rhetorical techniques that shaped representations of women in ancient texts. For example, in her influential article “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View,” Mary Rose D’Angelo became among the first to argue for an ideological reading of women’s portraits in ancient writing. She suggests that the portrayal of women in Luke-Acts reveals less about women’s actual roles in early Christianity and more about the author’s desire to promulgate a particular *image* of Christianity: one that conformed to and upheld Roman civic values.⁵⁵ Elizabeth Castelli similarly demonstrates that merely paying attention to reconstructing the lives of ancient women misses the equally important task of understanding how writings that seemingly do not pertain to women or to women’s history actually do: by employing gender stereotypes and social hierarchies as metaphors in a theological discourse, these writings reinscribe inequities and social injustices. Her

(ed. A. Powell; New York: Routledge, 1995), 199–218. On Jewish women’s lives, see Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (TSAJ 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996); and Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (BJS 36; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), the latter of which is notable for using non-literary sources to reconstruct women’s civic and religious roles in Diaspora Judaism. On women’s roles and status in the early Christian movement, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*; Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*; Anne Jensen, *Frauen im frühen Christentum* (Traditio Christiana 11; Bern: Peter Lang, 2002); Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women’s Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*; and Dennis R. MacDonald, “Virgins, Widows, and Paul in Second Century Asia Minor,” *SBLSP* 16 (1979): 169–72.

⁵⁵ Mary Rose D’Angelo, “Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 441–61. Some of the excellent recent work in this vein includes Elizabeth A. Clark, “Ideology, History, and the Construction of ‘Woman’ in Late Ancient Christianity,” *J ECS* 2 (1994): 155–84; idem, “Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the ‘Linguistic Turn,’” *J ECS* 6 (1998): 413–30; MacDonald, *Early Christian Women*; Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Virginia Burrus, “Reading Agnes: The Rhetoric of Gender in Ambrose and Prudentius,” *J ECS* 3 (1995): 25–46. Recently, some scholars have expressed concern that such exclusively ideological readings overlook information that *could* be gleaned about women’s lives and thus threaten to “silence” women more than the historical sources themselves do. See, for example, Shelly Matthews, “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography,” *JFSR* 17 (2001): 39–55; and Elizabeth A. Clark, “The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the ‘Linguistic Turn,’” *CH* 67 (1998): 1–31.

commentary on Romans, for example, insightfully draws into full view ideologies of power in Paul's "theological" discourse, undermining the problematic distinction between "theology" and social "history."⁵⁶

As these scholars demonstrate, narratives about ascetic virgins or foolish women reveal little about actual women and a lot about how early Christian (male) writers used women "to think with." As either "pure" virgins of the church or as "foolish" and promiscuous women of "heretical" sects (opening their vessels to prophecy and more), "women" function as tropes in Christian discourse. Such depictions rely on existing stereotypes and socially constructed notions about women to communicate ideas about power (ascetic or institutional) and authority ("heretical" or "orthodox"). For example, women's sexuality serves in these discourses to locate types of Christianity on the scale of "orthodoxy" and "heresy:" their sexualized bodies symbolically measure the presence of "heresy" like thermometers determining the presence of a fever.⁵⁷ Rather than guarding women's chastity and good reputations (signified by women's silence) as bishops undertook to do, Marcus, as noted earlier, is portrayed in these attacks as a sexual wolf, preying on the sheep in his own fold. Similarly, the "virgin" in Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae* fails to protect herself and, in fact, is accused of laying herself open to magical seduction through her behavior, demonstrating women's inability to guard themselves sexually or to exercise self-mastery and thus to generate sufficient ascetic power in order to overcome a magician's predations. Both texts justify male ecclesiastical control and diminish the power of independent ascetics.

By contrast, the *Acts of Andrew* uses "magic" as a foil to demonstrate the power of asceticism. In a manner similar to Luke-Acts (where magic functions as a foil to reveal the superior power of the Holy Spirit), magic functions in this text to show the merit and power of virginity. The virgin's identity matters no more than the magician's: like him she functions as a trope to show that even a powerless young girl can overcome demonic magic through *askesis*.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Romans," in *Searching the Scriptures* (ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza with A. Brock and S. Matthews; 2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993-1994), 2:272-300 (280).

⁵⁷ The thermometer metaphor is my own but the notion of heretical women functioning as "symbols" is influenced by Burrus, "Heretical Woman."

This narrative of magical attack reinforces the larger ideological message of this apocryphon, which strongly advocates asceticism and celibacy.⁵⁸ Continence and ascetic rejection of material pleasure and possessions form a central feature of this spiritual attitude. The “magician,” therefore, could be taken as a symbol for the snares of this world, especially sexual lust, while the “virgin” signifies the pure soul, whose freedom and power triumph through rigorous ascetic practice.⁵⁹ Her victory over the demons dramatizes, in narrative form, the victory of the soul through *askesis* and *gnosis*. Like the female victims of magic in heresiological writings, this “woman” also functions as a trope. She is shown to triumph due to her ascetic merit whereas the other “women” failed insofar as they allowed themselves to be seduced. Neither trope—that of the heretical woman or pure virgin—represent *real* females. In both cases the female characters embodied in these male writings dramatize issues and concerns related to men.⁶⁰ Portraits of pure virgins—whether they succeed at defending themselves from magical seducers or not—valorize female chastity and modesty. So, even while the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* portrays the virgin of God as powerful because of her asceticism, it nonetheless reinscribes women’s sexuality as the primary site of female identity and self-worth.⁶¹ In all these depictions of magic, therefore, women are being used to think with. Their sexualized bodies communicate conceptions of religious power and legitimate authority.

The question to ask, at this point, is why then did the heresiologists enlist the trope of female foolishness to disparage “heretical” movements, rather than invoke the familiar and powerful “witch”

⁵⁸ See Jean-Marc Prieur, “Introduction to the *Acts of Andrew*,” in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *Writings Related to the Apostles*, 111–12. According to Prieur, the *Acts of Andrew* preaches a dualistic and Gnostic-influenced view of salvation that involves the ascent of the soul toward the pure realm from the impure world of the body.

⁵⁹ The magician could also represent “Rome”; on this identification, see Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Figuræ; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 79. Boyarin considers the ideological function of “virgins” in early Jewish and Christian martyrologies (67–92); he posits that both Rabbis and Church Fathers “identified” with female virgins as a mode of “disidentification with a ‘Rome’ whose power was stereotyped as a highly sexualized male.” This insight into the symbolic role of “virgins” in early Christian discourse suggests a reading of the above narratives of magical attack in which the virgin represents the pure “church” and the “magicians” symbolize violent, invasive and phallic Rome.

⁶⁰ Cf. Cooper, *Virgin and the Bride*, 3–4, 13–14.

⁶¹ See Castelli, “Virginity and Its Meaning.”

stereotype to demonize these women and the "heterodox" churches associated with them. On the one hand, the fact that these writers level accusations of magic only against *male* leaders of competing movements could suggest that women were not perceived to be especially threatening and most likely were not the "leaders" in charge. On the other hand, the most pressing concern for at least certain of these writers seems to be women's public involvement and ministerial roles in "heterodox" churches. Unless women's involvement is functioning entirely as a trope to ridicule and undermine the competing communities, one may assume that women did, in fact, play a prominent role in these churches and that it was precisely their involvement that garnered the hostility of these early Christian writers. In this case, the accusations against men could have been a strategy for "silencing" women by ignoring their leadership roles. By depicting women as victims and not as magicians, this rhetorical strategy would reinscribe women's passivity in opposition to the historical reality of some women's lived experiences. Furthermore, by questioning the sexual chastity of these women, men in the "heterodox" communities would have felt pressure to conform to "orthodox" standards in order to protect their own honor in society.

This pattern of representation, however, begins to change in the mid-third century. In a letter to Cyprian (256 C.E.), Firmilian, the bishop of Cappadocia, accuses a female prophet of being possessed by demons and of using their power to perform miracles (*principaliū daemoniorum impetu ferebatur ut . . . admirabilia quaedam et portentosa perficiens . . .*).⁶² Firmilian admits in his letter that this woman conducts the Eucharist and baptism according to usual "orthodox" requirements but he claims that her sacraments are invalid because she accomplishes them with demonic rather than divine power. What is it about her power that indicates she is possessed by demons? Given the perceived orthopraxy of her rituals, one has to assume that the single problem with her miracles and sacraments is her sex. In other words, we see here exactly what one would expect to see in earlier instances where women's ministry is being challenged—namely, the employment of "magic" discourse to undermine a woman's legitimacy. By accusing this woman of being possessed by demons and

⁶² Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.10.2. See the text in Hartel Guilelmus, ed., *T. C. Cypriani: Opera Omnia* (CSEL 3.2; Vienna: Apvd C. Geroldi Filium Bibliopolam Academiae, 1871), 811. I thank Ayse Tuzlak for drawing my attention to this text.

using their power, Firmilian, for all intents and purposes, charges her with sorcery and harnesses the “witch” stereotype circulating in Roman literature. His accusation presumes and reinscribes the gendered discourse of magic outlined earlier in the essay; Firmilian can assume that no one will question the demonic origin of this woman’s power because everyone knows that women engage in magic. Similar accusations of magic against women can be found in fourth-century writings. John Chrysostom, for example, castigates women in his congregation for slipping back into idolatry by employing incantations and amulets.⁶³

I suggest that Christianity’s marginal status in the first and second centuries contributed to shaping its use of magic-discourse. Drawing on the work of Virginia Burrus and Daniel Boyarin, I propose that Christian depictions of *female* victims and *male* magicians reflect an ego identification on the part of these male writers with vulnerable but chaste female bodies over against the invasive violence of Rome.⁶⁴ In these narratives, the magician/heretic threatens the carnal integrity of Christian women. Depending on the ideological location of the writer, the virgin either succeeds or fails to defend herself through *askesis*. The victimized women thereby serve as a trope for early Christian writers to locate themselves and their communities in opposition to Rome’s power and violence, imagined in terms of the sexualized masculinity and aggression of the “magician.” Competing forms of Christianity—so-called “heresies”—are likewise demonized through identification with the violent danger of the male “other.” Through these rhetorically-crafted representations, competing forms of Christianity are collapsed into the same ideological opposition that Rome similarly occupies: between aggressive threatening masculinity and the vulnerable body of the “virgin” church. In this imagined relationship, women’s bodies and chastity represent the purity of the “true Church.” Violated female bodies, on the other hand, signify the corruption and deviance of “heretical” churches.⁶⁵ According to this line of thinking, early Christianity’s marginal status vis-à-vis Rome determined its application of magic-discourse and its choice of stereotypes in the contest for authority that defined its early history.

⁶³ Cf. *Hom. Col.* 8 (PG 62:357–9); and *Catech. jur.* (PG 49:240).

⁶⁴ Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 67–92; and Burrus, “Reading Agnes.”

⁶⁵ Cf. Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 79.

BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES:
ROMAN IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY, GENDER CONSTRUCTS
AND PAUL'S INTER-NATIONALISM*

Davina C. Lopez

Paul has often been interpreted as a Jew who converted to Christianity, tried to convince other Jews of his “new” position, was unsuccessful in this attempt and, as a result, then turned to non-Jews who were more amenable to his outlook. However, the so-called “New Perspective” in Pauline studies has shifted the focus, reassessing Paul in light of first-century intra-Jewish, rather than modern Protestant-Catholic or Christian-Jewish, conflicts.¹ Here Paul is reconfigured as a Jew who expands his Judaism to include non-Jews in a “messianic” religious assemblage.² In this schema, Paul is “called,” like the prophets before him, to bring the “good news” of the crucified Messiah to differing communities where he finds himself “among Jews and Gentiles.”³ This Paul brings the monotheism of Israel (“God is one”)

* I thank Todd Penner for a most cordial conversation that has led to my inclusion in this exciting volume and Richard Horsley for generously providing a collaborative venue at the 2004 Society of Biblical Literature meeting in San Antonio, Texas, USA, where I presented ideas and images developed further in this essay. Brigitte Kahl, Luise Schottroff, Hal Taussig, Natalie Boymel Kampen, Lillian I. Larsen, Elizabeth Theoharis and Rachel A. R. Bundang have offered helpful criticisms and questions at various stages of the present work, which is based on a portion of my dissertation in New Testament Studies at Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.). Grace Lewis and Jennifer Phillips read and commented on drafts. All biblical quotations are my own translation. Unless otherwise specified, all non-biblical primary text translations are taken from LCL editions.

¹ See the landmark work of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977); as well James D. G. Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” *BjRL* 65 (1983): 95–122, who coined the term “New Perspective” for this shift in Pauline studies. For a succinct summary of the “New Perspective” and a provocative application, see N. Thomas Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

² For recent readings of Paul as deeply situated in Jewish tradition, see Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Mark Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in Its First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

³ Krister Stendahl's classic *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976) still invigorates debates about Paul's religious and social context, including his position as a Jew among non-Jews.

to the polytheistic, “pagan” Gentiles, who are then “grafted” onto the Jewish tree under the one God (cf. Rom 9–11). Recent work has built further upon this “New Perspective” and positioned Paul as a critic of the Roman imperial order and “religion” from his Jewish standpoint.⁴

This inclusion of Gentiles in Paul’s rhetoric is a theme that also benefits from attention to gender and power dynamics. This means endeavoring to understand the concept “Gentiles” in a more nuanced and power-conscious way, taking into account what “Gentiles” signified in Paul’s Roman imperial context. New Testament scholarship still affirms the term ἔθνη (or “nations”) as a solely Jewish designation for non-Jews, “non-Israelite Christians,” “unbelievers” or “those not limited to the people of Israel.”⁵ This characterization follows a biblical tradition relying on the distinctions between Israel and “the nations” in the First Testament.⁶ Such designation identifies Paul’s usage as consonant with Jewish tradition, but misses the political and imperial dimensions of this term. Various kinds of ancient writers (e.g., those composing geographical and historical accounts, as well as poetry of the first century c.e.) delineate the concept of ἔθνος (Latin: *gens*) as a “nation” or “tribe” of people conquered and assimilated into Roman rule. The term is political in these contexts and imposed from the perspective of the Roman conquerors.⁷ The ἔθνη is a term used to designate the peoples of the Roman Empire; it maps the terrain of Roman *imperium*. In this broader political analysis, the meaningful hierarchy is not Jew/Gentile, but Roman/nations.

⁴ Paul as a Jewish person politically interested in opposing the “religion” of the Roman Empire is explored most thoroughly in three recent volumes edited by Richard Horsley: *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997); *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation; Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2000); and *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2004). Also see the examination by John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’ Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2004).

⁵ See Georg Bertram and Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “ἔθνος. ἔθνικός,” *TDNT* 2:364–72; as well as “ἔθνος” in BAGD.

⁶ See especially James M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul’s Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians* (WUNT 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995). Also see Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle’s Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

⁷ The Romans themselves are also a “nation,” but stand out as the “lords of the world, nation of the toga” (Vergil, *Aen.* 1.282)—that is, the nation predestined to be associated with civilization and rule over others.

Visual representation (Roman art and material culture) offers a striking way to depict the ἔθνη as conquered outsiders incorporated into the Roman Empire. The Romans used visual communication, including symbols and allegory,⁸ to portray conquered lands and were especially innovative in this regard. Moreover, Roman visual representation of ἔθνη was usually accomplished using gendered personifications. While personifications were also used in more “positive” ways (e.g., for Roma or Tellus), the Romans consistently represented conquered territories and provinces in the form of women’s bodies, often displaying several women together in order to depict a collective of conquered territories.⁹ The use of ethnic personifications was part of a pattern in Roman visual representation that affirmed imperial ideology in distinctly gendered ways. However, gender understood as “difference in hierarchy”¹⁰ is only comprehensible in terms of a relationship of one sort or another. Roman/nation hierarchy (or: “Romans on top”) was thus communicated by showing female personifications of conquered lands alongside their male Roman conquerors. Land is to conqueror, as nation is to Roman, as female is to male; such analogies appear crystallized in Roman visual representation.

Visual representations, then, are an overlooked but fruitful way to analyze constructions of gender and power in Paul’s Roman imperial context. As articulated by feminist art historian Natalie Boymel Kampen, a particular ideological task of representation is to express institutions and cultural configurations as “natural,” so “inevitable and universal” that the viewer accepts them as such.¹¹ Roman imperial emphasis on visual communication also makes the naturalization of ideas about institutions, cultural configurations and hierarchies intelligible to a wider range of people than just literate elites: all who could see and walk past a victory monument would probably be able to “read” it. Public art proclaimed the corporeality, coherence

⁸ Peter J. Holliday, *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112.

⁹ René Rodgers, “Female Representation in Roman Art: Feminizing the Provincial Other,” in *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art* (ed. S. Scott and J. Webster; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 69–93.

¹⁰ Natalie Boymel Kampen, “Gender Theory and Roman Art,” in *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (ed. D. E. E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson; New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery and Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 14–25 (14).

¹¹ Natalie Boymel Kampen, “Epilogue: Gender and Desire,” in *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology* (ed. C. L. Lyons and A. O. Koloski-Ostrow; London: Routledge, 1998), 267–77 (267).

and universality of the Roman state. The iconography of Roman imperial art thus forms a symbolic system, or a “grammar,”¹² that articulates and naturalizes power relationships.

Such visual representation offers a revealing path to comprehending perceptions and constructions of gender and power in Roman society, as well as to perceiving how gendered imagery communicates Roman imperial ideology. “Reading” these images in conversation with New Testament texts can therefore be productive. Methodologically speaking, attention to visual representation of the Roman/nations hierarchy as a thoroughgoing current in imperial ideology also assists the critic in asking different questions of Pauline rhetoric. Roman visual representation is used as what I call a “complementary semantic system” through which New Testament texts can be interpreted. Analyzing what Paul Zanker has called “the power of images”¹³ together with texts works toward fostering a deeper understanding of gender constructs and, therefore, power relations in the New Testament, early Christian literature and the social formation processes embedded therein.

To further this engagement, in this essay I examine three examples of how the Roman Empire communicated an ideology of world rule through the use of gendered imagery in personifications of conquered ἔθνη: a *Judaea Capta* coin, the Prima Porta cuirassed statue of Augustus and reliefs from the “Sebasteion” (the Roman imperial cult complex) at Aphrodisias. These three examples, in divergent media and differing original viewing contexts, feature male and female bodies in hierarchical relation to one another. Romans are rendered as victorious “super-men” and defeated nations are consolidated into dejected, racially-specific women’s bodies. Through these visual expressions I argue for an understanding of Roman imperial ideology as thoroughly “patriarchal.” I then focus on how a view of gendered power relations in Roman imperial visual representation can deepen, even radicalize, an interpretation of Paul’s gendered rhetoric and “mission to the Gentiles” as having a political orientation and transformative agenda. While attention to Roman visual representation

¹² See Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art* (trans. A. Snodgrass and A. Künzl-Snodgrass; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹³ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

has wide-reaching implications for the study of the New Testament,¹⁴ I will concentrate in this essay on Paul's letter to the Galatians, since found here are the bulk of Paul's autobiographical comments, including his articulation of his call to proclaim Christ among "the nations" (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν; Gal 1:15) and some lucid gender-based suggestions related to his sense of community construction.

A *JUDAEA CAPTA* COIN

Scholars have long noted the importance of ancient coins as important primary sources for the study of the New Testament. The sheer number and variety of coins makes them especially useful for filling out the architectural and material record of the New Testament world, in some cases even confirming the historical *realia* of New Testament writings. Ancient coins also feature images that provide insight into the politics and social issues of their context. Roman coins' obverse sides, followed next by imperial portraiture, constituted the most important and wide-reaching medium for official dissemination of the emperor's likeness.¹⁵ Aside from images of the emperor and other political figures, coins feature pictures of buildings, gods and goddesses, historical events, daily use objects, plants, animals and personifications of lands and bodies of water.

Images on Roman coins are not only important for identifying historical events and archaeological sites. These coins also served as an official medium for communication of state-sanctioned concepts, including proclamation and celebration of victories over enemies.¹⁶

¹⁴ Some of these implications are explored in Annette Weissenrieder, Friederike Wendt and Petra von Gemünden, eds., *Picturing the New Testament: Studies in Ancient Visual Images* (WUNT 2.193; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

¹⁵ Carlos F. Noreña, "The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues," *JRS* 91 (2001): 146–68 (154 n. 44).

¹⁶ Numismatists and historians debate how the images on coins were chosen; whether they were the choice of the emperor, senate or only those who actually minted them; the implications of that process; and what coins can actually reveal about Roman imperial ideology. As a scholar of early Christianity, I see coins, and especially the images on them, as an important and often overlooked component of the material record during the time of the New Testament's textual production. I agree with art historians who posit that Roman imperial portraits, regardless of the medium, tended to have been state-approved. I also see coins as an everyday conduit for official dissemination of imperial ideology through iconography. For a succinct summary of the major conflicts surrounding the political significance and intentions of ancient Roman coins and their usefulness for the study of early Christian

They were a product of Roman political power, especially in conquered territories.¹⁷ While the images may have been chosen by a few, “the fact of the coin, its existence as a product of political power, had a compelling impact on the beholder . . . The image conveyed the message”¹⁸ to its holders. The regularity with which images of imperial victory appear on Roman coins speaks to such images as expressive of Roman imperial ideology. As a form of state-sanctioned public communication, coin iconography naturalized the universality and inevitability of Roman state domination.

The *Judaea Capta* coin series is among the most famous that Rome issued in the imperial period and is one of the most familiar depictions of conquered peoples during this time.¹⁹ Because of the coins’ relationship to a most decisive event in Jewish history, the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 c.e., scholars of the New Testament and early Judaism have tended to emphasize this series as an appropriate area of material culture to engage. It is easy to assume that the Roman conquest of the Jews is the most (if not the only) important conquest of interest to the study of the New Testament and early Christianity. Such an assumption, however, underscores an inattention to power relationships and politics in the New Testament’s Roman imperial context.

texts, see Richard Oster, “Numismatic Windows into the Social World of Early Christianity: A Methodological Inquiry,” *JBL* 101 (1982): 195–223. For a constructive use of Roman coins in the interpretation of New Testament literature, see Larry J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World* (JSNTSup 134; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Despite Maecenas’s urging Augustus to prohibit conquered Roman territories to “have currency or weights or measures of their own; instead let them use ours,” there still was a vast amount of indigenous coinage throughout the Roman Empire. Many local officials helped their regions show deference to Rome by minting their own coins in honor of, for example, the imperial cult, featuring iconography similar to that used at the empire’s capitol. For Maecenas’s plea to Augustus, see Cassius Dio 52.30, cited in Kenneth W. Hall, *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 97.

¹⁸ P. J. Casey, *Understanding Ancient Coins: An Introduction for Archaeologists and Historians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 37.

¹⁹ Also issued was a closely related *Judaea Devicta* (“defeated”) coin with similar iconography, often appearing with single male bound captives. These coins are frequently pictured in major reference works as “New Testament” or “biblical” coins. Sometimes they are the only Roman coins discussed. For an example, see John W. Betlyon, “Coinage,” *ABD* 1:1076–89. In contrast, Kreitzer (*Striking New Images*) extends Oster’s discussion of coins as a “window” onto early Christianity, systematically arguing that attention to the range of Roman coins minted during the period of early Christian textual production will enhance our understanding of that world.

Judaea Capta coins depict Roman victory and domination over the Jewish people and territory. An extensive series, the majority of the coin types show captured, bound, draped and seated female bodies, as well as some captured, seated and/or standing, scantily clad male bodies.²⁰ All of the captive bodies, male and female, are thought to be Judean due to their hairstyles, costuming and specific identifiable attributes (such as weaponry). Roman figures are also present on some types, as are palm trees and military trophies. One version of this reverse type is typical and will be used for the present study. On this coin (plate 1) a palm tree stands in the middle, between a soldier on the left and a sitting woman on the right. This coin commemorates the end of the Jewish uprising, illustrated by the Jewish woman shown mourning the “fate” of her people.

Elements of *Judaea Capta*’s iconographic program tell a coherent story about imperial power relationships beyond simple historical commemoration. The palm tree, for example, symbolizes abundance in the Middle Eastern desert and thus acts as a signifier of the people now under Roman control. The tree also serves as a further designation for the province of Judea *herself*, which may emphasize the point that only the Jews living in Jerusalem and its environs, and not those in Diaspora, were responsible for their own defeat at Roman hands.²¹ The female body sitting dejectedly at the tree’s base has often been called a “Jewess,” intimating that she is an individual female.²² But feminist New Testament scholar Luise Schottroff has noted that, though the Romans probably had other intentions with the visual program, Jewish persons might have seen this woman as “the mother of Zion,” whom the Romans defeated but God will raise up again.²³ This point underscores the notion that in biblical

²⁰ All of the image entries and discussions concerning “Judea” in the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* focus on coins from this series. See Herbert A. Cahn, “Iudaea,” *LIMC* 5:531–33 (plates), 811–13 (discussion).

²¹ The presence of the palm tree could be a definitive signifier of the location of the suppressed revolt (i.e., that it was situated in Judea). This, along with the fact that Titus and Vespasian did not take the title “Judaicus” after their joint triumph, could be an indicator that they did not want to associate the destruction of Jerusalem with the Diaspora (i.e., all Jewish people). See E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (SJLA 20; Leiden: Brill, 1976), 229.

²² Smallwood designates her as a Jewess who represents “a personification of the province” (ibid., 229–30).

²³ Luise Schottroff, *Lydia’s Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity* (trans. M. and B. Rumscheidt; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 190–91.



Plate 1: “*Judaea Capta*” Sestertius of Vespasian, issued following the destruction of Jerusalem. Illustration by author, after *LIMC* “*Iudaea*” no. 14 (also *BMCRE* 117).

imagery women are similarly often used to personify land,²⁴ suggesting that such visual representation was widespread in the ancient world.

Art historians support this point, as they also understand that it is not unusual in visual representation of the Roman imperial period to use women’s bodies as personifications of territories and defeated peoples. The woman here need not be an individual or specific Jewish woman, but is representative, rather, of a geographically-specific ἔθνος, Judea. She is the smallest figure in this composition, sitting in the dress of her people and appearing draped. She holds her head in one hand and looks downward. The man on this coin

²⁴ Ibid., 187–90. It also suggests the multivalence of the imagery itself.

is a Roman soldier, symbolizing military victory. Some have posited this figure to be Emperor Vespasian himself,²⁵ although most important is his designation as an undefeated representative of Roman military power. As such, his body is the largest figure in the composition, almost as tall as the tree. He holds a staff upright with his right arm and a *parazonium* (a dagger designed to be held at the girdle) with his left. He steps with his left foot on a helmet. Even though he is in close spatial relationship to Judea, he does not appear to be directly watching the woman. Yet his strength is linked to her dejection; he is not victorious without an enemy. Such a relationship reminds the holder of this coin that the Romans will ensure, after Judea's defeat, that she will never again revolt with any success.

The image program articulated by this *Judea Capta* coin constitutes a tiny, everyday portrait of basic imperial power relations: dominant and subordinate, active and passive (or, in this case, "pacified"). The empire is dominant, the land captured and subordinate. These power relations are visually expressed using gendered bodies both to show the differences between the conquerors and conquered and to communicate social superiority and inferiority. The coin "captures" the point well enough: Roman forces have defeated and *feminized* (i.e., placed in the subordinate "female" role) the people of Judea. Such feminization articulates a position of lowliness and humiliation in a Roman-defined, male-dominated hierarchy. The nation's collective femininity is not only humiliating, but contributes to the definition and reinforcement of Roman masculinity. The soldier appears as a "real" man. Allusions to penetration and domination emphasize and reinforce his prowess. In this respect, the positioning of his dagger in his groin area appears to be no accident. This representation of territorial conquest thus renders as naturalized a potent pattern of gender relations.

CUIRRASSED STATUE OF AUGUSTUS FROM THE VILLA OF LIVIA AT PRIMA PORTA

Sculptural representations of the emperor constitute a form of officially-disseminated imperial portraiture whose visual grammar is also important for understanding the New Testament's context. While larger

²⁵ See Kreitzer, *Striking New Images*, 137; and Harold Mattingly and Edward Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage: Vespasian to Hadrian* (vol. 2 of *The Roman Imperial Coinage*; London: Spink, 1967), 427.

and of a different medium than a coin, a portrait statue of Augustus from Prima Porta (plate 2)²⁶ also makes a statement about Roman imperial ideology by employing gendered and ethnic differences to express victory and “peacemaking.” This depiction of Augustus is one of the earliest examples of Roman imperial cuirassed (breastplated) statues featuring an emperor.²⁷ Such statues were erected throughout the Roman world to honor reigning and deceased emperors, imperial family members, victorious military generals, local heroes and the war god Mars.²⁸ The Roman cuirassed statue functioned as an important form of honorific dedication that would have been recognized as such in Rome and its provinces.²⁹ Provincial territories received

²⁶ This statue was found in 1863 in the so-called Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, near Rome, and is now housed at the Vatican museum. This representation of Augustus is one of the most familiar and widely discussed examples of imperial portraits of the Augustan age and perhaps of Roman imperial art as a whole. An extensive bibliography on the statue itself and its place in the Augustan program is included in Heinz Kähler, *Die Augustusstatue von Prima Porta* (Monumenta Artis Romanae 1; Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1959), 29–30; more recent work on this statue is included in Niels Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988), 50–56; C. Brian Rose, *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11–21; and Zanker, *Power of Images*, 188–92. On Roman imperial cuirassed statues as a whole, see the classic work of Cornelius C. Vermeule, “Hellenistic and Roman Cuirassed Statues,” *Berytus* 13 (1959): 1–82, continued in *Berytus* 15 (1964): 95–110; 17 (1966): 49–59; 23 (1974): 5–26; 26 (1978): 85–123; as well as Klaus Stemmer, *Untersuchungen zur Typologie, Chronologie, und Ikonographie der Panzerstatuen* (Archäologische Forschungen 4; Berlin: Mann, 1978). Vermeule’s *Hellenistic and Roman Cuirassed Statues* (Boston: Department of Classical Art, Museum of Fine Arts, 1980) contains relevant images and serves as a concordance for the *Berytus* articles and Stemmer’s work.

²⁷ Though the Romans made fairly extensive use of the cuirassed statue as a means to communicate imperial ideology, they were not the first to erect statues of victorious men wearing military armor. Many of the elements on the Roman portrait statues are similar to those employed on examples from the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

²⁸ There are more than 600 known cuirassed statues from the Roman imperial period. Of these about 150 depict conquered peoples and nations. Richard A. Gergel provides a valuable discussion (and notes) in “Costume as Geographic Indicator: Barbarians and Prisoners on Cuirassed Statue Breastplates,” in *The World of Roman Costume* (ed. J. Sebesta and L. Bonfante; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 191–208. The proliferation of cuirassed statues featuring (and indeed celebrating) conquered peoples underscores the point that such representation is key to portraying military victory as a core concept underlying the Roman imperial ideology of “peace,” which is premised on subduing and assimilating non-Roman peoples.

²⁹ Cornelius C. Vermeule posits that erecting a statue through which to honor the emperor in Greece or Asia Minor would be the easiest (and perhaps cheapest) way of expressing gratitude to Rome. The other options would be to manipulate already-existing Hellenistic-era monuments and/or make Roman-style ones such as arches, historical reliefs and so on; see his *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and*



Plate 2: Emperor Augustus in military dress. Marble figure from the Prima Porta. Vatican Museums, Vatican State. Photo Credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, N.Y.

officially sanctioned imperial portraits about every two years and these often affirmed the imperial cult or commemorated battles won.³⁰ These portraits belonged to a pattern of triumphal art identifiable in most areas of the Roman Empire, making the cuirassed statue another vehicle for expressing Roman imperial ideology.³¹

Cuirassed portrait statues utilized iconographic programs to communicate to the viewer the message of imperial victory, Roman identity and non-Roman subjugation. Often such programs visually documented Roman territorial expansion and invasion, communicating that such conquest ensured “peace.” On the Prima Porta Augustus, as on the *Judaea Capta* coin, these ideas are depicted using gendered imagery. The emperor’s strong, sturdy frame expresses victorious manliness. This portrait’s bodily representation, from square head to heroically and divinely un-clad feet,³² depicts ideal Roman masculinity and impenetrable stability. Augustus, the victor, sports features common to portraits of important Roman men: short-cropped and tame hair,

Asia Minor (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 41–46. Rose notes the likelihood of a patronage relationship leading to the erection of portrait statues and other dynastic monuments in the provinces, where the provincial city gives statues as gifts in anticipation of favors from the imperial family (*Dynastic Commemoration*, 8).

³⁰ Zanker discusses how the portraits in various parts of the Roman Empire, east and west, corresponded to identifiable types believed to have been standardized at Rome (*Power of Images*, 300–16). For an extensive discussion of the evidence for imperial cult in Asia Minor, see Simon R. F. Price’s seminal work *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For a discussion of the ways the city of Rome itself responded to imperial cult, see Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³¹ This point is discussed extensively in Zanker, *Power of Images*, 188–238. It is not so much the point that people throughout the Roman Empire would view the exact same statue portrait of the emperor in the identical place, but that the themes represented on the statues, as well as the faces of the emperors themselves, would be familiar. It is well-known that, following the Egyptian example, the Romans made statues with changeable heads—so a portrait would be updated with a new head whenever and for whatever reason it was needed. It is therefore imaginable that, at the very least, the emperor’s head would be recognizable in a larger geographical area.

³² Zanker argues for barefootedness as an allusion to divine status (drawing on a classical Greek “Polyclitan” imagery), underscoring Augustus’s own divinity (*Power of Images*, 189). Karl Galinsky takes a more utilitarian approach to Augustus’s feet, postulating that the lack of shoes is a symptom that the statue is a “copy,” whose boots have been removed after his death in order to highlight more fully his divinity (*Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996], 161). See later examples of the same phenomenon throughout Vermeule, *Hellenistic and Roman Cuirassed Statues*. Cf. the divine Claudius statue represented at Aphrodisias, discussed below.

a penetrating gaze on his straightly-aligned face and muscular legs. Military dress emphasizes winning status and shows off a well-proportioned manly physique. This Augustus is eternally youthful and vigorous just as biographer Suetonius half-heartedly reports.³³ Here there is no hint of the eyebrows meeting, the limp, the spots or itchiness supposedly plaguing the *pater patriae*'s older body. The remembered god-man image is flawless.

While in the Prima Porta rendering of Augustus the whole man is visually arresting, his cuirass (plate 3) has especially preoccupied scholars of the Roman Empire, especially in terms of imperial visual representation. This breastplate is considered the most ideologically sophisticated and elaborate of the cuirassed statues.³⁴ Its visual display marks the form of Augustus as a stand-in for the masculine triumphalism of the Roman Empire itself. The emperor bears a gospel of imperial salvation worn on his perfectly chiseled chest.³⁵ The central scene on the *imperator*'s abdominal muscles provides an entry point for interpreting the cuirass composition and the statue as a whole. It features two prominent figures positioned around the "first navel," flanked by gods, goddesses and various personifications.

On the left, a Roman soldier³⁶ stands with his arm outstretched toward a non-Roman man on the right, who hands an eagle-topped

³³ Suetonius, *Aug.* 79–81. The Romans tied the success of an emperor to how good-looking he was, highlighting a preoccupation with the dependency of virtuosity on appearance. Such good looks were also a cause for desire and identification on the part of conquered and subject peoples as well. Pliny's account of Trajan arriving in Rome, with none of the assembled being able to avert their eyes from his beautiful likeness (including women rejoicing over having children to live and serve under his command), is an example of this kind of identification (*Pan.* 22.3). It probably is not a coincidence that Trajan, responsible for subduing the Dacians and "securing borders," is looked up to, even desired, by his subjects, who, Pliny ensures to point out, are ready to serve with pleasure. See also the contrast, peppered throughout historical literature and visual representation, between the idealized beauty of the Romans as indicative of possessing the civility and fitness to rule the world and the strange and not-so-pretty features and wardrobes of "barbarians" of various types.

³⁴ Gergel, "Costume as Geographic Indicator," 194.

³⁵ This feature is viewed most productively as Roman "imperial theology," contrasted with the anti-imperial theology of Judaism (cf. Crossan and Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 13–68).

³⁶ There is much discussion about how this figure could have any number of identities, including an association with Mars. Gergel has seen it as a representation of the Roman army (*exercitus*); see "Costume as Geographic Indicator," 195.



Plate 3: Cuirass/Breastplate of Augustus from Prima Porta. Braccio Nuovo, Vatican Museums, Vatican State. Photo Credit: Alinari/Art Resource, N.Y.

military standard to him. This exchange represents a decisive historical event during the reign of Augustus: Roman victory over and pacification of the rival Parthian Empire. In 53 B.C.E. the Parthians took the Roman standards after a battle with Crassus's army. Capturing standards was a humiliation of the first order for the Romans and the Parthians' actions marked one of the most embarrassing events of Roman history where "[t]he chorus of those urging revenge never stopped."³⁷ Despite repeated attempts to recover the standards through military action (e.g., Antony in 40 and 36 B.C.E.), the Romans were not able to defeat the Parthians and Julius Caesar was assassinated while planning a campaign against them. In 20 B.C.E. Armenia became a client kingdom by way of diplomacy. This nation served as a Roman-aligned threat to the Parthians, who then "returned" the standards to Augustus in exchange for peace with Rome. Even though the standards' return was non-violent and the Romans had never properly defeated the Parthians, Augustus inscribes in the *Res Gestae* that he "forced" them to return the standards and to ask, "as suppliants," for Roman "friendship" (Augustus, *R.G.* 29.155).

These ideologically informed images received support on Augustus's cuirass, where the appearance of the Roman and Parthian men express (differences in) the relations of power between them. The Roman male models masculinity just as his big host, Augustus, does. He wears a helmet and cuirass, bearing a *paludamentum* clasped to his shoulder and a dagger at his side. The Parthian,³⁸ by contrast, has unruly, uncut hair and a big beard. He wears a loose-fitting, short tunic with trousers that the Romans associated with exotic eastern barbarian peoples who have not achieved their level of

³⁷ Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 155, referring to calls for Julius Caesar's revenge.

³⁸ The identity of this figure is also the subject of much discussion. Is it King Phraates IV, who returned the standards to the Romans, or perhaps Mithridates I, founder of the Parthian nation? The personifications elsewhere on the cuirass seem incongruent with a definitive personal portrait for these two central figures. Therefore the identification of this figure as a stereotypical representative, even personification, of the Parthian people and not a particular Parthian individual seems sound. Likewise, the Roman figure is not a specific man, but perhaps a personification of the victorious Roman army. Whatever the case, the power relationships between the figures are clear: active/winner, passive/loser. For a discussion of these figures as personifications, see Gergel, "Costume as Geographic Indicator," 195; Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*, 53; and, more thoroughly, John Pollini, "Studies in Augustan 'Historical' Reliefs" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1978), 8–74.

masculinity.³⁹ He is clearly not a part of the “nation of the toga” and he bears no armor, showing him to be an evident outsider. Indeed, the Parthian needs both hands to hold the imperial eagle. The Parthian’s stance, dress and passivity betray *effeminacy*. He is a “*girly-man*,” representing an entire nation of the same, who cannot handle the weight (both literal and symbolic) of the Roman standard—further implying that they are failures in military exploits despite historical attestation to the contrary.

Roman recovery of their standards from the Parthians was considered pivotal to the Augustan development of the *saeculum aureum* (“golden age”) and its related visual representation. In such idealized imagery the event of the Parthian “surrender” of the standards was manipulated from an embarrassing series of Roman military failures into a triumph that portrayed the east being brought to its knees.⁴⁰ This act of diplomacy was celebrated as a glorious vanquishing in several texts of the period and the image of a Parthian man on his knees was an especially popular one in coinage and other forms of visual communication.⁴¹ Thus, regardless of what “actually” happened, these images on Augustus’s cuirass tell the story of masculine Romans saving the world from the barbarian (and here passively constructed) east. This representation is consistent with numerous textual accounts portraying the Romans as being the race most fit to rule the world, especially the east, on account of their special manliness or *virtus*.⁴² Such “good news” is here portrayed as taking place in the presence, or according to the will, of the gods. They (Sol, Luna, Apollo, Diana), along with a personified Dawn pouring dew over Augustus’s left pectoral muscle, encircle the victorious event.⁴³ The opening of a

³⁹ In visual representation “eastern” barbarians like Dacians, Armenians and Parthians usually wear similar loose-fitting trousers while northern barbarians like Gauls and Germans wear tight-fitting pants. For examples of coinage featuring eastern barbarians, see Gergel, “Costume as Geographic Indicator,” 195 and 208 n. 12.

⁴⁰ This element is also reflected in quips like “On humbled knees Phraates accepted the law and rule of Caesar” (Horace, *Ep.* 1.12.27–28, cited in Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 156).

⁴¹ Zanker notes that the image of the kneeling Parthian was originally created by the Senate and apparently Roman elites also displayed such images on their rings (*Power of Images*, 187–91).

⁴² See Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132–35.

⁴³ On the spatial representation of these gods on the cuirass as being indicative of the Roman imperial pantheon, see F. van Keuren, “Cosmic Symbolism of the Pantheon on the Cuirass of the Prima Porta Augustus,” in *The Age of Augustus* (ed.

new “day” of peace, signified by the sun god drawing his chariot across the sky, commences with this event at the imperial savior’s navel, his rock-hard abdominal and pectoral muscles forming a frame. The Parthian defeat is portrayed here as resulting from, and further enabling the continuance of, Roman masculinity as central to the reinstatement of cosmic order.

While I have been preoccupied above with the male imagery in the representation, it is a necessary foil for understanding female visual representation, as effeminizing imagery functions on the basis of recognized cultural constructions of the female body. Indeed, Roman masculinity as portrayed in this scene on Augustus’s torso also provides the stability needed for a fertile future. A draped female figure appearing to be Tellus (Mother Earth)⁴⁴ reclines near the emperor’s genitals, which are safely ensconced beneath the form-fitting armor and cloak. She holds an overflowing cornucopia upward and looks beyond it at the Roman soldier. This fertile groin is the locus of a peaceful and abundant future. That pacification of the east results in Roman fertility and prosperity is further indicated by two infant children clawing at the woman’s loose-fitting gown. Likewise, baby Eros sits on a dolphin and clings to the much larger Augustus’s military skirt. In addition to this feature supporting the statue, the dolphin signifies *imperium* over the sea and Eros, along for the ride, illustrates that the future is bright.

R. Winckes; Louvain-la-Neuve: Center for Old World Archaeology, Brown University, 1985), 177–88.

⁴⁴ Although Pax and Cybele are certainly possible identifications for this figure, Tellus/Earth seems apt because of her attributes (cornucopia, two infants), her dress (fully clothed and draped) and her reclining pose. Tellus also is appropriate when her relation opposite Caelus and the rest of the gods “above” (in the “heavens”) is taken into consideration. The two central figures appear to be standing above or “on” her. This interpretation is further bolstered by the appearance of a similar woman sitting and holding two infants on the Ara Pacis. Her positioning at the bottom of this composition also recalls the mythological defeat of Gaia, mother of the Giants, famously commemorated visually on the Attalid Altar of Zeus at Pergamon (now in Berlin), as well as a panel from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias (see below). The imperial “new life” of abundance comes out of the defeat of the borderlands, as well as the surrender of the earth herself. I thank Brigitte Kahl for this helpful observation linking Roman imperial art to this earlier Attalid monument still in use at Paul’s time. For an in-depth discussion of the Great Altar as an exemplary monument in light of which Paul’s rhetoric to the Galatians can be understood, see Brigitte Kahl, “Reading Galatians and Empire at the Great Altar of Pergamon,” *USQR* 59 (*New Testament and Roman Empire: Shifting Paradigms for Interpretation*; ed. B. Kahl, D. C. Lopez and H. Taussig; 2005): 21–43.

Visually, the manliness expressed by and on Augustus would not be as strong or as intelligible without the contrasting feminized non-Roman conquests. Two women sitting across from each other under the emperor's nipples, almost in his armpits, provide this contrast. The figures represent conquered ἔθνη at, "physically" and geographically, the borderlands of the Roman Empire.⁴⁵ Each woman sits in traditional dress with attributes of the ethnic group that she personifies. The woman under the left armpit is thought to be Gallia/Gaul. She is fully clothed and wears the tight-fitting *bracae*/trousers typical of northern barbarians.⁴⁶ Her sheath is empty, indicating disarmament. She holds an indigenous horn with a dragon's head, probably a Celtic *camyx*.⁴⁷ A Gaulish military standard fashioned as a wild boar sits on the ground in front of her.⁴⁸ Her "sister" under the right armpit differs in dress, position and attribute. Her cloak has a fringe detail and she does not wear trousers. Scholars

⁴⁵ See the discussion of these two figures in I. M. Ferris, *Enemies of Rome: Barbarians through Roman Eyes* (New York: Sutton, 2000), 35–36.

⁴⁶ Celts and Gauls are often described in Greek and Roman sources as wearing *bracae*, shirts and *sagi* (cloaks) fastened to their shoulders with a clasp. All clothing items are brightly colored and patterned, forming a significantly outlandish appearance when seen with their stiff limed hair, tattoos and plethora of shining torque cuffs. They also often are depicted as fighting while nude. See, for example, Diodorus, *Library* 30; and Strabo, *Geogr.* 4.4.3.

⁴⁷ The *camyx* was a tall horn used by Celtic peoples across Europe, from Britain and Gaul (France) to the German Alpine region and Dacia (Romania). Several well-known examples of the head portion survive, the most notable one being the Deskford Carnyx of northern Scotland. Accounts of its use include the Gauls' sack of Delphi in 279 B.C.E., the Battle of Telamon in Etruria in 225 B.C.E. and Caesar's various battles with Gallic tribes. According to Diodorus, the Celts would use such "barbaric" trumpets to startle their enemies, making a harsh and confusing noise (*Library* 30). Polybius (*Hist.* 29.5–9) describes there being so many of these loud horns in battle that the piercing sound was not as if it were from humans but from the whole countryside itself. An "international" instrument, the *camyx* must have been common enough to capture the Roman imagination, thereby becoming a stereotypical attribute designating Celtic and Gaulish peoples in visual representation. A keystone at the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, for example, features a crouching woman next to one, identifying her as a representative or personification of a Celtic or Gaulish nation. A silver denarius coin (issued ca. 48 B.C.E.), whose obverse side features a stereotypical head (complete with the famed limed hair) of a personified figure identified as Gallia (a representation of the Gauls) or simply a female Gaul, also has a *camyx* behind it. See D. R. Sears, *History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors, 49–27 B.C.E.* (London: Spink, 1998), Coin #19.

⁴⁸ Gergel notes that consistency in the potential national representatives of this personification points to identification with Alpine or Gaulish tribes (Pannonia, Dalmatia, Gallia herself); see "Costume as Geographic Indicator," 196 and 208 n. 16.

have called her "Hispania," referring to Augustus's conquests of Spanish territory and peoples shortly before the statue's estimated date of commission.⁴⁹ She sits under a military trophy⁵⁰ and her sheath has a sword in it. The weaponry she bears indicate her status as an assimilated or client nation,⁵¹ but her crouching stance under the trophy decorated with the weapons and armor of her people designates her as a nation "brought to the ground" by Roman forces.

Though the two female personifications on Augustus's cuirass differ from one another, they are, like the Parthian exchange, crucial elements of the imperial order that his body communicates. They function as characters at the margins, indicating that the borders are under control. The recapture of standards from the barbarian Parthian east, the feminization of northern and western territories and the approval of the gods all mark the opening of the golden age of Roman peace. This "peace" is dependent on relations of domination and subordination, communicated visually as naturalized power relations between male and female (including passive male) bodies. These representations of femininity, like Judea juxtaposed with the Roman soldier on the *Judaea Capta* coin, enhance the domineering masculinity and submissive femininity at the core of Roman imperial consciousness.

⁴⁹ The *Res Gestae* mentions Hispania/Spain as experiencing the hand of Roman rule a number of times, including the following references: that it takes the "same oath of allegiance" as Italy and demanded Augustus to lead them after Actium (5.25); the "Spains" were "reduced to peace" with Galatia/Gallia and Germany (5.26); Augustus claims to have settled military colonies in Africa, Sicily, Macedonia, "both Spains," Achaia, Asia, Gallia/Galatia Narbonensis and Pisidia (5.28); and the Roman standards were recovered from Spain, Gallia/Galatia, Dalmatia and the Parthians (5.29).

⁵⁰ There is a second military trophy on Augustus's back without an attendant body near it. Some have theorized that this trophy, due to its inclusion of northern barbarian armor, weapons and helmet, represents Dalmatia in the Alpine region. This identification would be consistent with the *Res Gestae*'s placement of Gallia, Hispania and Dalmatia as regions conquered within close range of each other. See Gergel, "Costume as Geographic Indicator," 196; and Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*, 56.

⁵¹ Her appearance could additionally refer to the long and contested relationship the various Spanish tribes had with Rome before Augustus finally defeated them in 25 B.C.E. (marking a premature closing of the Temple of Janus's doors to signify "peace," since the Cantabrians revolted again in 22 B.C.E.) and divided the land. Some defeated Spanish tribes, such as the Numantines in 133 B.C.E. and the Cantabrians, preferred to commit suicide and destroy their own towns rather than submit to the Romans, thus depriving the latter of prisoners and slaves from among their ranks. Such behavior is a show of their love of "valor" and "freedom" according to Cassius Dio (44.5) and Appian (*Hist. rom.* 6, the "Spanish Wars" account).

RELIEFS FROM THE SEBASTEION AT APHRODISIAS

Both the *Judaea Capta* coin and statue of Augustus from Prima Porta feature images of Roman victory, portraying conquest of nations at symbolic and geographical frontiers. There are also racial and sexual overtones to this imperial ideology, which is not so subtly expressed through the rendering of military men as dominating “native” women. Such dimensions of Roman victory over foreign peoples are more overtly displayed in selected reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, part of the largest imperial cult complex found to date.⁵² The Aphrodisias complex was dedicated to the imperial family and stressed the relationship of that city with Rome. It was started and completed during the Julio-Claudian period, with slight modifications afterward.⁵³ The privately-funded complex had a temple

⁵² Ancient Aphrodisias of Caria (near modern Geyre) is still undergoing excavations that were started by New York University in 1961 under the leadership of Kenan T. Erim (d. 1990) and have continued under R. R. R. Smith and Christopher Ratté. For up-to-date reports on ongoing archaeological work, including a fairly comprehensive bibliography from 1961–present, see the website of the Aphrodisias project at: <http://www.nyu.edu/projects/aphrodisias>. For extensive bibliographical information and discussion of excavations until the mid 1980s, see Kenan T. Erim, *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite* (New York: Facts on File, 1986); and Juliette de la Genière and Kenan T. Erim, eds., *Aphrodisias de Carie, Colloque de l'Université de Lille III* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1987). Subsequent reports on excavations have been made and discussed in Kenan T. Erim and Charlotte Roueché, eds., *Aphrodisias Papers 1: Recent Work on Architecture and Sculpture* (JRAM 1; Ann Arbor: Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan, 1990); Kenan T. Erim and R. R. R. Smith, eds., *Aphrodisias Papers 2: Theatre, a Sculptor's Workshop, Philosophers, and Coin-Types* (JRAM 2; Ann Arbor: Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan, 1991); and Charlotte Roueché and R. R. R. Smith, eds., *Aphrodisias Papers 3: Setting and Quarry, Mythological and Other Sculptural Decoration, Architectural Development, Portico of Tiberius and Tetracyllon* (JRAM 20; Ann Arbor: Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan, 1996). For designation of the complex as an imperial cult sanctuary and consideration of the imperial cult's proliferation in Aphrodisias, see Joyce M. Reynolds, “New Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Aphrodisias,” *ZPE* 43 (1981): 317–27; idem, *Aphrodisias and Rome: Documents from the Excavation of the Theatre at Aphrodisias* (JRS Monograph 1; London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1982); idem, “Further Information on Imperial Cult at Aphrodisias,” *Studiū Clasice* 24 (1986): 109–17; and idem, “Ruler-Cult at Aphrodisias in the Late Republic and under the Julio-Claudian Emperors,” in *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity* (ed. A. Small; JRAM 17; Ann Arbor: Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan Press, 1996), 41–50. For images of the Sebasteion reliefs, I rely here on the high-quality presentation in R. R. R. Smith, “Imperial Reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias,” *JRS* 77 (1987): 88–138; and idem, “*Simulacra Gentium*: The *Ethne* from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias,” *JRS* 78 (1988): 50–77.

⁵³ Smith, “Imperial Reliefs,” 90. Inscriptions show that the complex was most likely started under Tiberius and finished under Nero. An earthquake damaged it

of Aphrodite—who was also known as Venus Genetrix, the mother of Aeneas and “the ancestral mother of the divine Augusti”⁵⁴—at one end and a *propylon* (a colonnaded entry-porch) at the other. Its two approximately 90-meter-long buildings faced each other and featured portico façades with two upper stories of life-size relief panels above a ground-floor level of what were probably shops. The buildings’ proximity to each other and boundedness by the *propylon* formed a “processional way”⁵⁵ between the porch and temple.

Though not all of it survives, the Sebasteion’s recovered sculptural program provides a narrative window into how “free” eastern Greek cities interpreted ideas about Roman imperial social structure and power relations. The complex appears to have set an example for later Roman imperial visual representation in Asia Minor.⁵⁶ Each portico level seems to have had its own theme. The south portico’s upper storey included scenes showing emperors and members of the imperial family, personifications, military trophies and several barbarians in various postures of defeat.⁵⁷ The lower storey displayed a standard cache of mythological scenes (Leda and the Swan, Achilles and Penthesilea, the Three Graces), including some with a more specifically Roman connotation (e.g., Aeneas carrying Anchises and the *penates* out of a burning Troy) as one moved closer toward the temple.⁵⁸

The panel of most interest for the present discussion depicts the vanquishing of a personified Britannia by a heroically and divinely nude Claudius (plate 4). This scene probably originally stood next to a similar relief of Nero hauling away a dead Armenia⁵⁹ with a

some time during its construction and restorations were made. Some time after Nero’s *damnatio memoriae* in 68 C.E., reliefs bearing his likeness were removed from display and used as floor panels within the Sebasteion complex and as stone for a theater renovation elsewhere in the city, thus explaining why they were found at a distance from the Sebasteion’s location and in such remarkably good condition.

⁵⁴ Venus’s identification as such is preserved from an inscription on a statue base of the *propylon*; see Erim, *Aphrodisias*, 123.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁵⁷ Smith (“Imperial Reliefs”) was one of the first to publish reliefs together as a group and discuss them as “imperial images,” thereby offering an interpretation of the Roman imperial cult on “Greek” terms.

⁵⁸ For a proposed sequence of the myth panels, see R. R. R. Smith, “Myth and Allegory in the Sebasteion,” in Erim and Roueché, *Aphrodisias Papers 1*, 89–100.

⁵⁹ This scene recalls representations of the mythological opponents Achilles and Penthesilea. According to the *Iliad*, Achilles killed Penthesilea, the Amazon queen



Plate 4: Relief of Emperor Claudius over Britannia from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. Photo Credit: New York University Aphrodisias Excavations.

triumphant Nike/Victoria figure standing between them. These reliefs were among several others showing captured male and female barbarian figures alongside victorious emperors.⁶⁰ Here Claudius stands over Britannia,⁶¹ cape flying behind him. His left leg is behind his victim and his right leg, knee on her thigh, pins her legs down. He grasps her head by her hair and pulls it back, leaving her no place to look but out. The emperor's right arm is missing, but it seems as though he is poised for the final blow. The sheath on his left side is empty and the weapon could be in his absent hand. Britannia, for her part, does not necessarily play the passive part all that willingly. She is dressed in a short *chiton* bearing her right breast, a characteristic of Amazon warriors and other female captives. The bare breast is a popular motif in depictions of women as wild (Amazons, dancers) and captured (violence, rape and supplication, often of Amazons).⁶² She has "barbarian hair"—long, loose, in the thick plaits common to depictions of Celtic peoples. She reaches up and, though her forearm is missing, her hand is fixed to his chest.

This Aphrodisian relief's representation of Britannia as a nation who will not surrender easily is consistent with the Roman conquest of Celtic Britain in the historical sources. Yet the image of a manly Claudius throwing Britannia down is inconsistent with his reputation

who came to the aid of the Trojans during that war; he only realized how beautiful she was after he killed her. The death scene is a popular representation in art showing Greeks battling Amazons. Vergil has Aeneas looking at one such frieze depicting the Trojan War in a Carthaginian temple and commenting on Penthesilea's valor (*Aeneid* 1.490). In Aphrodisias, another relief of Achilles and Penthesilea is part of the mythological series in the Sebasteion and a sculpture group believed to be of the two foes has been found in Hadrian's baths there (see Erim, *Aphrodisias*, 115; and Smith, "Myth and Allegory," 95–97). An Amazonomachy (which depicts the legendary battle between the Amazonians and the Athenians) was also found in Aphrodisias at the Agora Gate (see Pascale Linant de Bellefonds, "The Mythological Reliefs from the Agora Gate," in Roueché and Smith, *Aphrodisias Papers* 3, 174–86).

⁶⁰ Notably, of the published reliefs, all of the "anonymous," non-personified captured figures save one (who is buried up to his waist) are wearing tight breeches. Among them the one captive female figure appears to have her hands bound behind her back and her right breast bared like Britannia's. For the published reliefs featuring captives, see Smith, "Imperial Reliefs," plates 4, 10, 12, 18.

⁶¹ They are identified as such by an inscription underneath their image: "Tiberios Claudios Kaiser" and "Bretannia" on either side of a satyr's head. See Kenan T. Erim, "A New Relief Showing Claudius and Britannia from Aphrodisias," *Britannia* 13 (1982): 277–81; and Smith, "Imperial Reliefs," 115.

⁶² For the significance of the bared breast in ancient visual representation, see Beth Cohen, "Divesting the Female Breast of Clothes in Classical Sculpture," in Lyons and Koloski-Ostrow, *Naked Truths*, 66–98.

as an incompetent ruler and with descriptions of persistent British uprisings after the emperor's suppression of the island's native tribes. As with the earlier Parthian encounters, Rome only conquered Britain with great difficulty and largely through diplomacy. Regardless of these details, Claudius is portrayed far away in Asia Minor as a strong Roman man putting a female representation of Celtic Britain in her place, on her knees and on the ground underneath him.

Britannia's Amazonian and captive imagery designates her as a worthy opponent, but one who will predictably lose. In this sense, she is related to other depictions of Amazon warriors and similar figures destined to die, such as Gaulish types perhaps most readily identified as "Dying Gauls" and other "dying" figures in Pergamene iconography.⁶³ While the Amazon as such does not appear to be as prevalent a motif in Roman visual representation, allusion to defeat of these mythological woman-warriors and gender transgressors is recognizable in Britannia's appearance. As I. M. Ferris notes, this imagery makes a powerful statement "about Roman attitudes to imperial actions and politics and to conquered lands and peoples, and finally, of course, about male attitudes to women."⁶⁴ The female portrayal of this nation further associates sexual humiliation and violence with military conquest.⁶⁵ Britannia seems posed to be sexually "conquered" by Claudius, illustrating his impenetrability and her vulnerability.

⁶³ The "dying" figures include mythological types like Amazons, giants and centaurs, as well as their translation into historical outsiders and enemies like Gauls and Persians. They appear as singular figures, without conquerors, and one series is believed to have been part of an Attalid victory monument and/or the Great Altar of Pergamon. Such figures were also part of larger friezes depicting battle-scenes with their conquerors called, for example, Amazonomachy, Celtomachy, Gigantomachy and so on. Generally, these types of enemies are not destined to win the battles they fight. But "Pergamene" representation of conquered enemies (without depicting those who defeated them) took on new significance in a Roman context. Here the monuments were reinterpreted within a Roman framework: myth and history were collapsed and the difference between the mythological threat of giants and the material threat of Celts/Gauls became smaller. The defeat of earlier enemies, then, took on a specifically Roman meaning. The mythological battles against others to defend world-order became historical commemorations celebrating the mythologically and historically inevitable Roman expansion and defense of its borders in the name of a natural world-order.

⁶⁴ Ferris, *Enemies of Rome*, 58.

⁶⁵ Ferris notes that the sexual intimations of the Claudius and Britannia relief have made interpreters uncomfortable; see *Enemies of Rome*, 56–58. Rodgers argues that Britannia's disheveled state indicates "the highest degree of Otherness" ("Female Representation in Roman Art," 85). However unsettling, the linkage of sexual conquest with conquering land is a recurring theme in the history of imperial politics,

Claudius's possible sexual conquering of Britannia also infers a relationship involving Roman state fertility and the "resurrection" of conquered peoples to serve it. A Roman emperor did not "kill" nations permanently—he received submission, extended the hand of "peace" to them and incorporated them into his large-scale "house," the fatherland. Guaranteeing Roman familial fertility and dynastic reproduction through curtailing the fertility of captured barbarians is a common theme in Roman visual representation: the forced barrenness of the barbarians supports Roman peace.⁶⁶ The Ara Pacis and Trajan's Column, for example, feature scenes where Romans take children and women as captives. Likewise, as Suetonius reports, Augustus tried a new form of hostage-taking, that is, he took women from their native lands, as barbarians seemed to respond well to the persistent threat posed therein.⁶⁷ In this scenario, should Britannia live after Claudius is through, her children would be born into Roman slavery, into a colonized existence. Children born of this union are descendents of the attractive and powerful Roman emperor and the debased native nation, now forming part of the extended "family" inclusive of the entire known world. The emperor continues to manufacture children—"heirs" to Roman world order—through the defeat and acquisition of nations, thereby ensuring peace and the maintenance of the Roman family and race inaugurated by the "first father," Augustus.⁶⁸

The Claudius and Britannia relief in the Aphrodisian Sebasteion provides a telling portrait of Roman imperial ideology's gendered and sexual dimensions.⁶⁹ This panel probably faced the north portico,

colonialism and nation-building. Sexual conquest is a palpable tool of state control and a metaphor for expansionism where those doing the penetrating are "male" and the land is constructed as "female," with native inhabitants being (ef)feminized by overly masculine conquerors. See Richard Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); and David Tombs, "Crucifixion, State Terror, and Sexual Abuse," *USQR* 53 (1999): 89–110.

⁶⁶ Kampen, "Gender Theory and Roman Art," 20; and Ferris, *Enemies of Rome*, 38.

⁶⁷ The women were only sold into slavery if barbarian men rebelled any further or disregarded Roman friendship (Suetonius, *Aug.* 21). Additionally, Augustus took children as hostages and, in some cases, raised and educated them with his own (i.e., Roman) children (*Aug.* 48; cf. *R.G.* 5.32, where he mentions that client-kings sent children as pledges because they wanted to).

⁶⁸ Even though they were incorporated, the women were still in slavery with their children: Augustus's social reforms made it more difficult for Roman citizenship to be attained by foreigners (Suetonius, *Aug.* 48).

⁶⁹ This is also the case with the Nero and Armenia scene, which I do not have the space to discuss here. Britannia and Armenia represent personified conquered

ideologically linking opposite sides of the complex. The north portico featured a series of imperial and allegorical reliefs in the uppermost storey, including about fifty personified female ἔθνη. These figures indicated nations that the Romans had conquered and incorporated, from the Callaeci in western Spain to the Judeans and Egyptians in the south. While allegorical images like Day and Ocean perhaps serve to provide time and world-defining elements, the ἔθνη indicate a “distinctively Roman and imperial” way of visually representing the boundaries and conquered nations of the Roman Empire.⁷⁰ These ἔθνη were rendered as life-size single female bodies in high relief, each holding an attribute of her race and placed on a decorated and inscribed base with her name on it. Of the proposed fifty in the series, only fifteen intact panels and bases have been excavated. The names include thirteen ἔθνη designations⁷¹ and three major islands (Crete, Cyprus and Sicily).⁷² On one of the inscribed bases appears the phrase ἔθνοϋς ἰουδαίων.⁷³ The women’s bodies in these

nations and geographical outlines of the Roman Empire: Britannia to the far north, and Armenia to the eastern extremity. These two relief panels have the following in common: geographical boundaries, conquest and Amazon imagery and scantily clad emperors. They also are the only two of the found and published “imperial reliefs” where an emperor is shown “in action,” that is, in the course of victory actually touching conquered people. In other reliefs emperors are shown next to trophies and captives and are also in many cases nude (or almost nude), cloaked and holding weapons. They are standing and receiving crowns or presented in a *concordia* pose with a draped female figure. Also see a panel depicting a fully dressed and cuirassed Nero receiving a crown from a woman, probably his mother Agrippina, who is dressed in the manner of Tyche (Fortuna) and pictured bearing a cornucopia (Smith, “Imperial Reliefs,” plate 24).

⁷⁰ Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*,” 50.

⁷¹ Some of the names are fragmentary. Smith (“*Simulacra Gentium*”), following Reynolds (“New Evidence for the Imperial Cult”), has argued for the following identifications: Egyptians, Andizeti, Arabs (fragmentary), Bessi, Bosporans, Dacians, Dardani, Iarodes, Judeans, Callaeci, Piroustae, Rhaeti and Triumpilini.

⁷² Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*,” 58–59. The nations mentioned in the Sebasteion additionally differ in administrative status. Cyprus, Egypt, Judea, Sicily and Rhaetia were all separate administrative provinces. Crete was part of a province with Cyrene. Arabia and Dacia were not technically part of the empire until Trajan and the Bosporans never fully were. The other ἔθνη (Andizeti, Bessi, Callaeci, Dardani, Iarodes, Piroustae, Triumpilini), all in the west or in a area north of Asia Minor, were peoples within provinces of the Roman Empire. The Bessi were part of the Thracian client kingdom that became a province only in 46 c.e. The above nations are described in historical and geographical literature (e.g., throughout Diodorus, Strabo and Pliny the Elder) as sufficiently foreign or barbarian to warrant the “civilizing” force of Roman rule and many were perceived to be fierce brigands, robbers and similarly resistant to being ruled.

⁷³ Unfortunately, personifications of both “Judea” and “Ethiopia” to match the bases have not been found. See Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*,” 55, plate 7.

found relief panels and pieces are shown in varying shades of (un)civilized femininity. Variation in their dress indicates difference in status and, from the outlandish look of the foreign warrior designated “Piroustae” (an Alpine tribe) to the bound submission and disheveled look of an unknown captive to the Greek “familiarity” (read: assimilation or cooperation) of the well-dressed woman, each appears to be different from the others. All, however, are unified in their deference to Roman rule.

Seen together, the ἔθνη map the conquered Roman world.⁷⁴ Britannia as represented in the Sebasteion’s south portico is a woman who provides a northern boundary; the ἔθνη in the north portico designate other border-lands. Britannia also points to a continuity between a conquered nation in process (her past and present) and already conquered nations (her supposed future). Claudius holds Britannia’s head up by her hair, as if to show her the ἔθνη across the way, representing what she is about to become post-submission. We can imagine that she might get up and stand with her “sisters” in slavery and that those women similarly experienced what Britannia is “now” experiencing. The Emperor Claudius possesses an invincible, semi-nude divine male body and stands among a family of supermen and supportive Roman women (Livia, Agrippina), forcing the world’s most outlandish nations to surrender and position themselves in line.

Roman world conquest is here collapsed with mythological destiny in the Sebasteion by the inclusion of historical commemoration alongside recognizable mythological scenes, reinforcing the naturalness and inevitability of Roman rule. Familiar myths of the Greeks fold into those of the Roman state. Aphrodite is also Venus Genetrix, ancestral mother of the Roman imperial family. Personifications of Hemera/Day and Okeanos/Ocean are near the nations, as well as a suggestive portrayal of a draped Augustus over small personifications of land (holding a cornucopia) and sea (holding an oar).⁷⁵ Elsewhere

⁷⁴ Both Reynolds and Smith argue that this portico served as a visual representation of the inhabited conquered world, encompassing mainly the conquests of Augustus. In this sense the series serves as a visual *Res Gestae* of sorts. The islands of Crete, Cyrene and Sicily have the honor of being “returned” to Augustus from Cleopatra and Antony after the Battle of Actium. See Reynolds, “New Evidence for the Imperial Cult”; and Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*.”

⁷⁵ On Day and Ocean, see Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*,” 53, plate 7; and on Augustus, see Smith, “Imperial Reliefs,” 104–6, plate 6.

personified Roma stands over a reclining Ge (Gaia) and receives her bounty, indicating that the abundance of the land belongs to the victorious city of Rome.⁷⁶ These scenes, along with the imperial reliefs depicting conquest and capture, are near those featuring Apollo, Herakles, Dionysos and Aeneas. The crucial myth, that of Roman invincibility, serves to “engender the cosmos”⁷⁷ in this imperial cult complex. Power relationships and social order are built into the very structure of the Sebasteion as a vertical hierarchy where impenetrable masculinity tops penetrated, humiliated and acquiescent femininity. The hierarchy is presented as the natural order of the world, the result of which is Roman “peace,” fertility and abundance.

WHAT HAS JUDEA TO DO WITH BRITANNIA?

While the three examples of the Roman visual representation I have considered above may be different from one another, nevertheless they do show important consistencies and reveal a common theme in visual representations of Roman imperial ideology. The predominant theme is that Roman peace comes through conquering the whole world, one nation at a time, insisting that all marginalized knees (and heads) shall bow to the centralized victor. The conditions for peace are visually rendered in gendered terms that are hard to ignore, revealing gender as a fundamental grammatical element in narrative structures of Roman visual representation. Gender makes intelligible power relationships and hierarchies, which are further correlated with ethnicity and social status. And, first and foremost, it is important to recognize that Roman peace in this representation is patriarchal at its core.

Power relationships are communicated by the images on the coin, cuirassed statue and portrait relief. All three depict female personifications of defeated, racially-specific nations at the geographical borders of an expanding Roman Empire. While the women differ in ethnic identification by stereotypical elements such as clothing, hairstyle

⁷⁶ This panel is identified as such by an inscribed base. In another panel Roma is also shown crowning a personification of Aphrodisias, including “her” in the victory pattern with the emperors (see Erism, *Aphrodisias*, 117).

⁷⁷ See Susan Fischler, “Imperial Cult: Engendering the Cosmos,” in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (ed. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon; London: Routledge, 1999), 165–83.

and attribute, they are similar in their stance and relationship to the empire as subjugated entities. They are embattled, disheveled, dejected, captured and subdued. The male bodies, by contrast, show a remarkable consistency of style and stance: erect, virile and stable. The Roman soldier on the *Judaea Capta* coin and the Roman on Augustus's cuirass, not to mention the emperor's Prima Porta embodiment as *himself*, all certainly fit within this framework. Further, Aphrodisian Claudius throws and pins Britannia to the ground with little effort, his hair perfectly coiffed while doing so.

Visual representation of conquered peoples is not isolated or unusual, but constitutes a visible pattern in Roman art, and such examples should be considered synchronically.⁷⁸ The coin, cuirassed statue and reliefs do not merely commemorate individual conquests, but each is also part of a larger series. Though the *Judaea Capta* coin is well-known and documented by scholars, Judea is not the only captured nation depicted on coins. The Flavian dynasty may particularly have favored such a portrayal and Hadrian later would further domesticate the nations by picturing them as loyal and cooperative subjects of Rome on his own coinage.⁷⁹ The *capta* image on this coin and others like it recall earlier depictions of conquered peoples at the borders, such as the portrayal of Gaul and Spain on coins issued by Caesar.⁸⁰ This pose indicates that a Roman enemy was resistant to civilization or was a "barbarian" threat needing containment. Although Judea had status as a Roman province and such status was probably understood as being more civilized than some

⁷⁸ Ann Kuttner makes this point in *Dynasty and Empire in the Age of Augustus: The Case of the Boscoreale Cups* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); also see Ferris, *Enemies of Rome*, 1–25.

⁷⁹ These more domesticated personifications (i.e., represented as friendly to Rome) are consistent with Hadrian's later iconographical program in the "Hadrianeum," which depicts the world's provinces and territories as free-standing reliefs living in harmony with their rulers. Sixteen provincial reliefs and six trophies survive in at least four museum collections throughout Europe. For images and discussion of the Hadrianeum reliefs, see Marina Sapelli and Amanda Claridge, eds., *Provinciae fideles: Il fregio del Tempio di Adriano in Campo Marzio* (Milan: Electa, 1999); for the province series in coins and reliefs, as well as for a thorough examination of pre-Hadrianic personifications that still serves as a standard reference, see Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee, *The Hadrianic School: A Chapter in the History of Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934).

⁸⁰ See Jane M. Cody, "Conquerors and Conquered on Flavian Coins," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text* (ed. A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 103–24.

other provinces, she is still pictured as an enemy that needed to be conquered.⁸¹ As is well known from primary sources, Jewish people in Judea criticized various Roman programs, including the erection of statues of the emperor and imperial cult, before their rebellion against Rome that ended with Jerusalem's destruction. Judea's appearance as an uncivilized, ethnically distinct woman reinforces the Roman view of *her* as a "body" to be tamed and controlled in order for the civilizing peace to endure.

That the subjugation of women/nations inaugurates manly Roman peace is also evident on Augustus's Prima Porta body and cuirass composition. The active (large and small) Roman men and passive non-Roman women (including the non-manly Parthian) set the stage for Roman peace and stability. The pacification of these "women" at the borders is necessary for continued peace and abundance. Though this cuirass composition is most sophisticated, it is also but one of many such statues displaying the capture of outlandish, "barbarian" peoples as essential to victory.

The Sebasteion at Aphrodisias displays that worship of the emperor and imperial dynasty is equated with worship of the imperial victory that generates peace and stability, even for relatively wealthy eastern client cities. Victory here is specific to that result awarded following the defeat of various far-flung nations of the inhabited world. While Britannia is a particularly graphic representation of a woman being vanquished, the portico of ἔθνη signifies the numbers and variety of peoples who might have endured the same fate (or are at least imagined to have done so). The women shown standing in line represent diverse points in a whole world dominated by Roman *imperium*. Thus, there is a consistency and continuity to the representation of conquered territories and peoples being displayed in and on these diverse media.

τὰ ἔθνη: "UNITED" IN DEFEAT AND DEFERENCE TO ROME

The universality of Roman rule is a thoroughgoing notion in Roman imperial ideology, consistent in image and text. In visual representation, the personification of nations as women's bodies and conquerors as men's bodies communicates hierarchical power relations

⁸¹ Ibid., 109.

between Romans and others, as well as reinforces those existing between male and female, masculinity and femininity. Textually, lists of nations added to Rome's empire through military conquest are spread throughout extant literature and public inscriptions of the early imperial age. The whole world itself is composed of Romans and *omnes gentes* or πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.⁸² The nations, as tribes and peoples conquered and acquired by the Romans, have in common that they comprise the "inhabited" world. The coherence and implications of the victorious-Romans-over-defeated-nations message should not be underestimated. Representation of this image amounts to a "mapping" of empire's boundaries through attention to gender and ethnic interconnectedness. In this framework, the world is composed of individual, racially distinct parts, as evidenced by attention given to clothing and the diversity of attributes. Through representing the world in this manner, Roman imperial ideology creates and maintains the notion that the whole world is within reach. The nations together, then, whatever the perceived or real differences from each other may be, are united in their status and relationship to Roman rule.

The Aphrodisians probably did not invent their "united nations" of conquered peoples but most likely relied on an extant series from, and approved by, the empire's capitol. R. R. Smith has suggested that the sculptural program in the Sebasteion's north portico belongs to the "victory art" pattern involving groups of conquered peoples that was definitively Roman in production. It is documented that Pompey's theater in Rome's Campus Martius, which was restored by Augustus (*R.G.* 4.20; Summary 3), included a portico with fourteen *nationes*.⁸³ Servius's commentary on the *Aeneid* reports that Augustus also erected his own "portico of nations" where he placed "images of all the peoples."⁸⁴ This portico was apparently conceived from the procession of future conquered peoples shown on Aeneas's prophetic shield in Vergil's epic, where the bodies "move in long array, as

⁸² See further A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (2d ed., Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 437–44.

⁸³ Pliny, *Nat.* 36.41; Suetonius, *Nero* 46. See Pliny *Nat.* 7.3.34–35, where he mentions that Pompey also exhibited "images of celebrated marvels" as ornaments in the theater, such as monstrous births (considered prodigies and portents, as well as a form of entertainment, to the Romans) and women who generated an exceptional number of children set alongside images of the nations.

⁸⁴ Cited in Smith, "*Simulacra Gentium*," 71.

diverse in fashion of dress and arms as in tongues.”⁸⁵ The diversity of the nations—as different from one another as from Rome’s toga-clad race—is emphasized throughout. Such national diversity is intelligible by the use of stereotypically distinct clothing and hairstyles of the sculpted ἔθνη and their attributes such as weapons, instruments and the like.

Roman display of personifications of conquered peoples in series is congruent with other methods of visually and publicly recording the logic (creating and preserving world peace) and variety (diversity of nations making up the world) of Roman conquests. Roman representation of conquered nations, however, was not limited to life-size women’s bodies. Inscriptions, trophies and other booty would also do, as well as representations of conquered barbarians alone or in groups that were not necessarily personifications.⁸⁶ Velleius Paterculus records that the Forum of Augustus included *tituli* (inscriptions and images) detailing “Spain and the other *gentes*” (*Hist.* 2.39.2). Such a series has not been located and it may not even exist. However, as Barbara Kellum asserts, the Forum itself should be considered “a sexually charged, masculine environment.”⁸⁷ Inscriptions of the various *gentes* under Roman auspices would make for an interesting juxtaposition with the *Summi Viri*, represented by singular male bodies standing in line inside a colonnade.⁸⁸ Here men formed a Roman genealogy detailing the achievements of masculinity from the city’s founding, reinvented just in time for the designation of Augustus as *pater patriae* in 2 B.C.E. While reading this space as gendered, one must also not ignore the *caryatides* (here the columns in the shape of

⁸⁵ Vergil, *Aen.* 8.721. In Vergil’s description the nations were parading along as part of the triple triumph for Augustus. Framing the procession were three hundred shrines, games and shouting, as well as slaughtered steers on altars in all of the temples, further indicating the celebration of conquest. Interestingly, the Carians, representing Caria where Aphrodisias is located, are mentioned explicitly along with the Africans, Leleges, Morini (called “the furthest of mankind”) and Dahae.

⁸⁶ Ferris, *Enemies of Rome*, provides the most recent and thorough discussion and bibliography of barbarians in Roman imperial art, considering personifications alongside other, “nameless” visual portrayals of conquered people.

⁸⁷ Barbara Kellum, “The Phallus as Signifier: The Forum of Augustus and Rituals of Masculinity,” in *Sexuality in Ancient Art* (ed. N. Boymel Kampen; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 170–83 (170).

⁸⁸ For a reconstructed plan and extensive discussion of the Forum of Augustus, see Paul Zanker, *Forum Augustum* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1968).

captured women's bodies holding up the roof of the Forum) as a statement reflecting power relationships between rulers and subjects.⁸⁹

Monumental inscriptions were another means of describing various elements of the conquered Roman world, both in Rome and the provinces. Inscriptions were erected publicly as part of Roman architectural projects and were meant to be seen. The *Res Gestae* itself, including the lists of Augustus's conquests in the name of "peace," was inscribed on two bronze tablets on his tomb and was located near the large world map of Agrippa featuring the entire Roman world, comprised of Italy and conquered lands.⁹⁰ Weapons and other spoils from accomplished conquests were collected and displayed in Roman temples just as images and deities were taken from conquered peoples and planted at Rome in the name of "diversity."⁹¹

Descriptions of the Roman world were also mounted outside the capitol city and the *Res Gestae* was inscribed at the temple of Augustus

⁸⁹ The *caryatides* (columns shaped like women's bodies) in the Forum may be modeled after those at the Parthenon in Athens, but they are thereby not simply a "design element" (i.e., evidence of Romans copying Greeks) or gender-neutral. Vitruvius, writing in the early imperial period, provides a probably contrived explanation for the *caryatides* in the context of discussing how architects should be historically informed, knowing that, when they employ elements from previous structures, they should be aware of the message they send. The women represented as "Caryatids" were the Carians conquered by Greece after a failed conspiracy with the Persians. They were led in a triumph and placed in slavery as an "eternal warning"; architects then designed figures of women who were to carry burdens (i.e., hold up the roof) for inclusion in public buildings "so the penalty of the sin (*peccatum*) of the Caryatid women would be known to posterity and historically recorded" (*On Architecture* 1.1.5). Whatever the history, their appearance as women's bodies should not be ignored. Noteworthy is Vitruvius's inclusion of the story in a treatise discussing architecture for the Roman Empire, where it seems to make the point that the image of women's bodies in Roman public buildings could send a handy and familiar message of defeat already communicated by the Greeks. For an extensive discussion of the Roman reception of this female-as-column form as presented at the Erechtheion in Athens, see Alexandra Lesk, "A Diachronic Examination of the Erechtheion and Its Reception" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2004).

⁹⁰ Rhiannon Evans suggests that, due to their close spatial proximity, it would not be difficult to read these two geographically-inclined items together. See her "Containment and Corruption: The Discourse of Flavian Empire," in Boyle and Dominik, *Flavian Rome*, 255–76; cf. R. Moynihan, "Geographical Mythology and Roman Imperial Ideology," in Winckles, *Age of Augustus*, 149–62.

⁹¹ For particularly vivid descriptions of how "foreign" gods traveled to Rome, see Ovid's *Fasti*. For a discussion of Roman cultural appropriation as a part of imperialism, as well as how non-Romans reacted to the plundering of their homelands and to the display of their sacred images at Rome, see Catherine Edwards, "Incorporating the Alien: The Art of Conquest," in *Rome the Cosmopolis* (ed. C. Edwards and G. Woolf; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44–70.

and Roma in Ancyra in the Roman province of Galatia.⁹² Its connection to the imperial cult strengthens an interpretation of the Aphrodisias Sebasteion as a visual elaboration upon achievements of the imperial family, descended from Venus and Mars, starting with Augustus “over land and sea” (i.e., the cosmos). Strabo mentions an altar (and Pliny the Elder a Triumphal Arch) dedicated to Augustus in Lugdunum (Lyons), which featured a list of sixty conquered Alpine and Gallic nations. Pliny is sure to note that only the nations who had *not* shown resistance to Roman military confrontation were kept off the list, implying that those who had resisted had demonstrated a certain measure of hostility to Roman domination (*Nat.* 3.10.134–36). Strabo’s account references that the site included “images of these nations, one of each nation, and another great altar” (*Geogr.* 4.3.2). Seeing such inscriptions, when paired with images of captives with and without trophies, indigenous weaponry and personifications, served to demonstrate victory in battle and remind Romans and non-Romans alike of their ideal place in the social and political order.

The Romans additionally displayed the nations “in the flesh,” using human representatives to personify captured peoples in public events like triumphal processions. Historical accounts of Roman triumphs narrate such occasions as featuring a pageant of images of nations and/or members of conquered tribes themselves being paraded in traditional dress through Rome’s streets.⁹³ Cassius Dio’s account of Augustus’s funeral states that the procession included images of ancestors (except divine Caesar) and accomplished Romans, followed by Pompey and “all the nations that [Augustus] had acquired, each represented by a likeness which bore some local attribute” (56.34.3). Attention to ethnic differences in the clothing and attributes shows that real-life personifications also differed in dress and appearance so as to signify racial diversity and the vastness of the inhabited Roman world. According to Tacitus, “the names of the nations conquered by him were to be carried in front” during Augustus’s funeral

⁹² On the Greek and Latin inscription, see the still-reliable study by Ernest G. Hardy, ed., *Monumentum Ancyranum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923); on the inscription’s location at the temple of Augustus and Roma in Ancyra, see Daniel Krencker and Martin Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1936).

⁹³ For an in-depth treatment of textual accounts of the Roman triumph, see especially Hendrik S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

procession (*Ann.* 1.8.4).⁹⁴ Josephus's account of the Flavian triumphal procession after Jerusalem's defeat describes how the parade included select Jewish prisoners in traditional dress, posing while perched precariously on top of float-like constructions that included tapestries detailing how Roman soldiers had defeated them.⁹⁵ The triumphal procession thus provides an opportunity to display nations in a manner consistent with their representation in sculpture and other media: captured, defeated and deferential to Roman world rule.

The *Judaea Capta* coin, the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta and reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias each feature personifications of nations as defeated female bodies depicted alongside victorious Roman male bodies. Roman conquest is represented in gendered visual language just as Roman imperial world order is expressed as a gendered world order. Peace comes through patriarchy: feminine submission stabilizes Roman masculinity. Images of men dominating women are consistent, from the small coins changing hands every day to the honorific portraits of emperors—from an imperial forum in Rome to the largest imperial cult complex yet found and identified in western Asia Minor. Visual representation presents this social order as if it were fundamental to cosmic stability and peace, as if it were the natural, inevitable and best possible arrangement for social relations. And within this framework τὰ ἔθνη form a central component—Roman identification of the “nations” is a critical element in this broader gendered imperial imagery of the natural cosmic and colonial order of things.

RE-VIEWING PAUL AND THE “GENTILES” IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Returning to the matter raised at the outset of this study, the above examination of the ἔθνη personified by women's bodies in Roman visual representation can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the term “Gentiles” or “nations” in Paul's Roman imperial context

⁹⁴ According to Cassius Dio (51–56) more than forty nations were represented. Of these, nine (Egyptians, Dacians, Dardani, Arabians, Ethiopians, Bessi, Rhaetians and Bosporans) appear in the found reliefs and inscriptions at the Aphrodisias Sebasteion.

⁹⁵ For an account of the triumph, see Josephus, *B.J.* 7.131–53. For a discussion, see Mary Beard, “The Triumph of Flavius Josephus,” in Boyle and Dominik, *Flavian Rome*, 543–58.

and in his own rhetoric. This term is political and not solely what we moderns might call “religious.” It can signify both non-Jewish ethnicities and the non-Roman nations conquered by and incorporated into universal Roman rule. Rather than simply a theological stand-in for “non-Jewish Christian” in Paul’s letters, the term ἔθνός is thus actually politically multivalent. To be sure, Paul’s use of this term to designate “those who are not Jewish” is still relevant, but this meaning is not the whole story. What visual representation makes clear about the “Gentiles,” from a Roman perspective, is that the power relations between Romans and nations is such that other nations (the Jews included) were expected to show deference to Roman *imperium*.

Whether or not Paul saw the *specific* images explored in this study—and we may never know for sure all the things he saw, read, touched or heard—he must have been exposed to and fluent in the thoroughgoing language of images in his Roman imperial context. Visual communication of Roman victory through conquest was consistent and widespread enough in the Julio-Claudian period—during Paul’s lifetime—that he would have encountered its various expressions. At the very least, he would have seen it in Athens, in Asia Minor (including his home city Tarsus), in Corinth and in Rome. In these places he would have seen portraits of emperors and monuments commemorating historical events, including arches and imperial cult complexes. While he never saw *Judaea Capta* coins and attendant visual imagery depicting Jewish defeat, he might have seen and even held similar Roman coins with representations of other defeated peoples and cities. He would have seen female personifications of conquered nations and conquering Roman males, which in all likelihood included, as the evidence indicates, the Jews represented alongside other captive nations, even named as such and shown as ethnically specific women’s bodies, like in the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias.

For those of us interested in reading Paul as a critic of the Roman Empire (including its over-the-top narrative of inevitable patriarchy) and in analyzing early Christianity as a complex of social formations using a “rhetorics of resistance” (in diverse ways) to criticize imperial designs, an approach that takes “the power of images” seriously provides rich material for both consideration as well as complication of some familiar interpretive problems such as representations of women and “others” in early Christian literature. Attention to gender constructs further illuminates and localizes the power issues at

stake and enables us to “see” imperial power operating on racialized, gendered and sexualized terms.

Interpretive problems that can be seen differently through attention to gender constructs and, therefore, power relationships, are not simply left to passages that explicitly mention women’s names or bodies, however. One such complex of issues in the study of early Christianity, notably the relationship between “Jews and Gentiles” and, in a related way, Paul’s so-called “missionary zeal” for what is often thought to be only a “non-Jewish” cohort, is problematized by understanding (and seeing!) that Jew/Gentile is not a viable dichotomy in Roman imperial consciousness. We can see, “before our very eyes,” that, to the Romans, Jewish people constituted just another tribe to capture, nation to rule and “woman” to dominate. The real split and hierarchical performance in Roman imperial ideology is between Romans and others—Rome and the nations, Rome and the whole inhabited world subjugated and kept “in line” by the empire.

While I have argued that the language of Roman imperial ideology and power is gendered at its core, Paul also uses gendered language to navigate and criticize the very patriarchal structures I have examined above. I contend that Paul, like many of the New Testament writers, provided Jewish intervention into Roman ideology. In other words, insofar as Paul articulates a political anti-Roman stance in his letters, he does so through negotiating the same gender constructs and imagery expressive of Roman ideology. To the degree that the New Testament itself provides a rare textual glimpse into Roman imperial society “from below” and suggests struggle and resistance, gender is at work here as well.

We must, therefore, begin to realize that when Paul uses the term ἔθνη there is more to this emergent picture than religious and theological “difference” with respect to Israel and Judaism. To be sure, Paul’s use of this term has significance within his Jewish framework, but it is a Jewish framework undoubtedly and unavoidably shaped by the Roman imperial metanarrative ordering the whole world. Roman imperial visual representation helps us to see both the gendered connotations of the terminology as well as its broader political relevance.

Paul refers to himself as the apostle “to the nations.” Paul’s use of ἔθνη is always in the plural, save for one instance where he quotes Deut 32:21 (Rom 10:19), indicating that he does not conceive of “Gentile” as a designation for a singular (“Gentile”) person. Moreover,

throughout his letters, when considering the “nations” he appears to be largely interested in their relationship to Jews. He uses ἔθνη relative to περιτομή (“circumcision”; Gal 2:8, 9) and “Jews” (Gal 2:14). Circumcision is also mentioned relative to ἀκροβυστία, “foreskin” (usually: “uncircumcised”), placing “nations” and “uncircumcised” in the same semantic field. This would seem to indicate a binary opposition between Jews and nations, but it is important to locate Paul’s discussion of this term. Paul’s use of “nations” is highly concentrated in Romans 9–11 (the “tree-grafting” of Jews and nations) and 14–15 (the “weak and strong” fellowshiping together), with both sections of his rhetoric explicitly concerned with an integrative relationship between Jews and other nations. Table fellowship among Jews and the nations is also a preoccupation of Paul’s in Galatians 2. According to Gal 2:11, Peter’s fear of “the circumcision” (φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς) and his subsequent withdrawal from the “table of nations” is what Paul says is his reason for “opposing him to his face” in Antioch.

The “Table of Nations” tradition of Genesis 10 has been identified by James Scott as a motivator in Paul’s use of the term.⁹⁶ According to this tradition, all of the nations of the earth were descended from Noah after the flood. They blanket the whole world and can trace their origins back to a common “father,” further back even than Noah to Adam and to the creator God of Israel. The world, therefore, is composed of all of the nations—including Israel, not outside of or in addition to it—who share a common ancestry. While Scott has presented evidence indicating that Paul references this tradition, I am not sure that “nations” always signifies “those outside of Israel.” Paul also genealogically links “all of the nations” to Abraham, who is presented as the father of Jews and nations, circumcised and uncircumcised, since he himself followed God before he received the covenant of circumcision (cf. Rom 4; Gal 2:8). In other words, according to Paul’s rhetoric, Abraham was identified both with the “foreskin” (nations) and “circumcision” (Jews), making him the “father”

⁹⁶ See Scott, *Paul and the Nations*. Scott maintains that Paul’s use of ἔθνος exclusively signifies the nations apart from Israel (122–34) and he therefore does not fully explore the political implications of the nations’ common descent from one source (i.e., in the gendered metanarrative of Israel all nations are related by blood and called back to Jerusalem) in relation to a Roman imperial ideology of conquest over all the nations.

of both groups. In Paul's Jewish framework, then, all of the nations are connected through common descent from the God of Israel.

While all of the nations, including Israel, belong to the same human family from the start in Paul's Jewish framework, the Romans, as I have delineated above, also had a tradition of locating all of the nations in space and time through political propaganda,⁹⁷ of which visual representation constituted a primary mode. The theme of relatedness is not found in the Roman imperial ideology of Paul's time. Rather, the fate of all of the nations, according to the Romans, is to be ferreted out and found, conquered and incorporated into the Roman "family" through military violence and subsequent enslavement and death. Such is the divine mandate of the master nation chosen by Jupiter and given "empire without end, without limits on space or time" (Vergil, *Aen.* 1.279). Rome, the chosen nation, celebrated its elect destiny through violence against others. In Roman foundation myths and stories, geographical and historical texts and in accounts of events mediated by triumphal processions and visual representation, the nations are constructed as foreign to Rome and, as a threat, they must be defeated and displayed as such. Cataloging and defeating foreign nations builds up Rome's power as a universal dominator and slaveholder. The "great men" of the genealogy of Roman rule, from the gods to the "father" Augustus as displayed in his Forum, have in common achievements like military victory over non-Romans. In the Roman imperial framework, all of the nations are linked to the *pater patriae* through conquest and capture, not creation and brotherhood. The nations who blanket the earth, in this schema, belong to Rome and should be subjugated by force to a "god," one who is also a human state ruler.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of lists of nations, including inscriptions like the *Res Gestae*, as being integral to Roman political propaganda and expressing the universal domination of the Roman Empire under the emperor/*princeps* (including how analysis of such materials can shift how scholars view the purpose and agenda of Luke-Acts), see Gary Gilbert, "The List of Nations in Acts 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response," *JBL* 121 (2002): 497–529. I use much of the same Roman materials as Gilbert and largely agree with his assertion that "Luke-Acts presents Jesus and the church as existing in competition with Rome and its leaders over the claim of universal authority" (525). However, similarities and differences in gendered (and genealogical) expressions of "universal authority" from Roman and early Christian perspectives remain relatively unexplored, which indicates inattention to the differences in the "deep structure" of power relations suggested by Roman and early Christian claims of world dominion and sovereignty.

Paul's use of ἔθνη should therefore be seen as relevant and gendered in both his Jewish and Roman contexts. Roman imperial ideology reflects relations of power as "power-over," in masculine and sexual terms. This point is most explicitly made on the body of the Roman male himself: he is always to be a penetrative sexual partner. Women, slaves and foreigners were all fair game as recipients of Roman penetration. A "real (Roman) man" is not to be penetrated in any way, literally or even figuratively.⁹⁸ Any hint of penetrability rendered the body "un-male" (or female) and thus on the "bottom." But Roman justification of male/female relations such as the impenetrability of the male and the receptivity of the female extends far beyond the individual body and its activity to Roman corporate, national ideology. The feminine is to be conquered by force or to be complicit in the impenetrability of the male. Moreover, characterization of non-Roman nations collectively as having emphatically hyper- or homosexual inclinations effectively feminizes them and places them on the bottom of a male/female relationship, as does their collective representation as women's bodies in visual imagery. The Romans, embodied by the emperor, naturally occupy the top position in this scheme.

In Galatians Paul presents himself as a man who formerly was impenetrable, excelling above those near him and dominating others, thus imitating the paradigm of Roman imperial masculinity. Paul presents himself as a man who was one way and then another. The life Paul lives before and after this experience are indeed divergent, but not because he left Judaism and converted to what moderns have come to name and live as Christianity. As several scholars have already proposed, Paul becomes a different kind of Jewish person. But difference in "religious" orientation is hardly the entire picture: he is interested in presenting himself as being changed into a different *man*, and even a *woman* of sorts.

In Galatians 1, Paul recalls that he was "excessively persecuting the assembly of God" and was "ravaging" it (Gal 1:13; cf. 1 Cor

⁹⁸ For a concise treatment of specifically Roman masculinity, see Jonathan Walters, "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought," in *Roman Sexualities* (ed. J. P. Hallett and M. B. Skinner; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 29–43. For a lengthier and more detailed investigation, see Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*. Also see Diana Swancutt's essay in this volume.

15:9; Acts 8:1–3). He tells the Galatians that he was “advancing in Judaism” above contemporaries “in my tribe (γένος)” (Gal 1:14; cf. Phil 3:4–6). He retells his birth story: “. . . God, the one who *separated me out of my mother’s womb* and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his son *in me* so that I might proclaim him among the nations (ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) . . .”⁹⁹ (Gal 1:15). Paul presents himself as a (fatherless) mother’s son called by God in a manner consistent with First Testament prophets. Jeremiah, for example, is known by God before being formed in the womb and is appointed a prophet “to the nations” (Jer 1:5). God “reveals” to Paul that what he is “born to do” is to proclaim Christ among the nations. To do this, he stops persecuting people. His turn from violence is rumored among the assemblies of Judea, who did not see him but heard that Paul was “proclaiming the faith he was once ravaging” (Gal 1:23).

Paul’s narrative of his “former life” shows what kind of man he was and how he has changed. Taking to wandering around the eastern portion of the Roman Empire represents only part of this alteration. Looking at the gendered and sexual facets of Roman imperial ideology as I have attempted to do here, I see that Paul was, in his former life, reproducing the very same power structure that the Roman metanarrative produces and portrays as natural. He narrates himself as an impenetrable and unstoppable man “persecuting” and “ravaging” those who differed from him. He was on top, having advanced beyond others of his *ethnos*. Paul was behaving as a proper Roman soldier according to imperial ideology: dominating others, policing boundaries and employing his right of *imperium*. Indeed, according to the depiction in Acts 9:1–2, he was telling synagogues to collect prisoners, binding them in chains and leading them through the capitol as Romans might do with barbarian captives.

The difference in Paul’s activity after his revelation is not only that he “believes” in Christ, but his image of self and behavior moves from dominator to dominated, from masculine to feminine. Paul has “died to the law” and “been crucified” with Christ (Gal 2:19) so that he might live to God, indicating that this is a life of new and vulnerable masculinity. Instead of ravaging and persecuting, Paul

⁹⁹ The NRSV translation erases the bodily aspect of the womb, the personhood of Paul’s mother and the suggestive image of Christ being “in(side)” him: “God, who had set me apart *before I was born* and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his son *to me*” (Gal 1:15).

performs as a man for and with, not against and above, others, especially the nations. If he has, through Christ, realized that his nation is as endangered as others throughout the Roman Empire (i.e., it will inevitably be conquered and assimilated), it makes sense that he aims to put down weapons, ask others to do the same and try to share a table in solidarity at Antioch in Galatians 2.

Such solidarity among the defeated would represent a substantial challenge to Roman world rule. I see Paul's "call," then, as "consciousness," a new configuration of (gendered) knowledge about the world and a renunciation of his previous affirmation of the power relations made natural by Roman imperial ideology. Moreover, Paul appears more conscious of the particularity of his Jewishness as well as of the commonalities with members of other nations throughout the Roman Empire. We only need to recall the images: instead of identifying with Claudius, now he identifies with Britannia. Instead of imitating a line of victorious emperors commemorating their impenetrability, Paul presents himself as sent "to the nations," that is, he moves toward standing in line with all the defeated peoples—of which the Judeans were but one.

Furthermore, Paul becomes vulnerable in a manner that he would not have been as a manly persecutor imitating Roman patterns of conquest and domination. By Galatians 4, for instance, Paul has transgressed all normative genealogical constructs—fathers begetting sons the "natural" way, that is, through marriage and intercourse; the primacy of one son over another; and an inheritance for the oldest male—all of which grounded the Roman construction of masculinity outlined above. Non-dominant masculinity enables the Galatians to move from slave to son to heir through Paul's labor. They must become as Paul is, for he has become as they are (Gal 4:12): he was hurt when he first visited with the Galatians, but they did not, as they might have, defeat him (Gal 4:13–14). Instead, they took care of him. Paul's self-identification with "weakness of the flesh" is then transformed into femininity.¹⁰⁰ But this is not ordinary defeated femininity as the Romans would have it; it is suffering through procreative power: "my children, for whom again I suffer birth pains

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion of the "mimesis" pattern in Paul's rhetoric, see Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991). Castelli rightly notes that Galatians 4:12 does not fully fit into this pattern.

until Christ is formed in you . . .” (Gal 4:19; cf. 1 Thess 2:7).¹⁰¹ Here Paul the mother is concerned for *her* “children” (τέκνα, not υἱοί [sons]) inside whom Christ is taking shape. This procreative image offers a contrast to the dominant fertility paradigm of the Roman Empire as depicted in visual representation. While Roman emperors guarantee racial fertility and reproduction through conquering and plundering the nations, Paul’s fertility with the Galatians is born of the physical pain of care and support among the conquered. Again, Paul uses explicitly gendered imagery to (re)negotiate community formation among his Galatian addressees.

In terms of gender and genealogy, Paul is not the only mother of the “Christ-formed children” in Galatians. Through the only explicitly named “allegory” in all of his extant rhetorical display, he manipulates the Hagar-Sarah mother entanglement from Genesis to further an unnatural genealogical justification of alternative power alignments.¹⁰² It is here where I believe Paul is most transparently attentive to both his Jewish genealogical framework and Roman political propaganda, particularly personifications of lands and cities as female bodies. He identifies “Hagar” and “the free woman (Sarah)” as personifications of conquered and free lands respectively. Hagar is “Mount Sinai in Arabia,” corresponding to “Jerusalem now,” and is “in slavery with her children” (Gal 4:25). The “other woman” is “Jerusalem above,” who is “free” and is “our mother” (Gal 4:26). While Paul affirms that the Galatians are children of the free woman (Gal 4:31), it is clear that they know what it means to be children in slavery with their “mother” since he admonishes them not to “again be held by a yoke” (Gal 5:1).

Paul, like the Romans, uses women here as signifiers of group identity, indicating that he perhaps is conversant in imperial political propaganda. However, he manipulates these tropes—the women stand for something else, as his designation of allegory clarifies—into

¹⁰¹ See Beverly Gaventa, “Our Mother St. Paul: Toward the Recovery of a Neglected Theme,” *PSB* 17 (1996): 29–44.

¹⁰² Brigitte Kahl, “Hagar between Genesis and Galatians: The Stony Road to Freedom,” in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. C. A. Evans; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 219–32. For a different reading of Gal 4:21–5:1 in the context of Anatolian mother-goddess traditions, see Susan M. Elliott, “Choose Your Mother, Choose Your Master: Galatians 4:21–5:1 in the Shadow of the Anatolian Mother of the Gods,” *JBL* 118 (2000): 661–83.

two possibilities for the city of Jerusalem. The examples of Roman visual ideology we have seen show some striking similarities between the allegorical Hagar and the allegorical personifications of defeated nations as the Romans depicted them. Hagar is a dejected foreign woman who has been conquered and made to submit; to whom should be clear. Paul calls Hagar a slave woman who bears a son born according to flesh. “Flesh” indicates the dynamics that brought Hagar a child in Genesis: desperate coercion and probably rape; but the coercion, conquest and rape facing the nations in Paul’s Roman imperial context cannot be far from view. The allegorical Hagar who generates a son according to flesh for Rome could be any nation: Judea, Galatia, Armenia, Britannia, Germania, Hispania, Africa. She is defined by the patriarchal dynamics of submission and co-optation, generating children for imperial reproduction.

Paul provides a more specific identity by twice relating his Hagar to a place, “Mount Sinai.” But this Mount Sinai is in slavery, indicating that what Sinai stands for has been captured and enslaved. Therefore, the ones who want to obey the Jewish law that Sinai represents should “hear” that this law has been forced to serve Rome. Paul also becomes quite specific by saying that Hagar “stands in line with Jerusalem now.” She is an allegorical personification of a subjected Jerusalem and her children are enslaved along with her. There are a few literary representations of nations as women enslaved to Rome. The clearest link to Paul’s Hagar is in Tacitus’s description of Calgacus’s speech to the Britons on the verge of going to war with the Romans: “Britannia pays a daily price for her own enslavement, and feeds the enslavers, and . . . in this world-wide, age-old slave-gang, we, the new hands, worth least, are marked out to be made away with” (*Agr.* 31.2).¹⁰³ The image of Hagar enslaved to Rome

¹⁰³ Similarly, in Josephus’s famous “speech of Agrippa” dissuading the Jews from going to battle with Rome, several nations are designated as being enslaved to Rome. In this speech Agrippa “shows” the other nations in the “whole of Roman hegemony” by mapping them out for the Jews. Many of the same nations appearing in lists and inscriptions commemorating Roman world domination appear here, except they are explicitly named as being enslaved. Mentioned foremost as an example of the formidability of the Romans are the Greeks. The Athenians, who once fought so diligently for the freedom of Greece, “now are slaving to Romans” (νῦν δουλεύουσιν Ῥωμαίοις; *B. J.* 2.358). The Lacedaemonians (i.e., the Spartans) “love the same masters” (ἀγαπῶσιν τοὺς αὐτοὺς δεσπότας; 2.360). The Macedonians, who with Alexander “scattered the seeds” (παρασπείρουσιν) of the rule of the world (τὴν οἰκουμένην ἡγεμονίαν), bow (προσκυνοῦσιν) to the ones to whom Fortune has given favor (2.360). Agrippa implores the Jews to see that, when they say it is hard to

with her children represents a “woman” we can imagine standing amongst a series of defeated nations, such as those depicted in the Aphrodisias Sebasteion. As a city, she stands for imperial co-optation.

Paul’s contrast of the slave and free women is not limited to denigrating one and celebrating the other. The allegorical free woman in Galatians is not a captive and therefore does not figure in a procession of conquered nations. Her son is born according to promise, that is, the Genesis promise from God that Sarah will bear a heir, who will ultimately develop into many nations but, according to Gen 15:13, will have been in slavery to a foreign power before attaining that freedom. “Jerusalem above,” as she is called here, is designated by such freedom. She does not have a man and is barren, indicating that she has not been submitted to the same patriarchal procreative dynamics as Hagar. Yet her children will be many. Her freedom from the procreative coercion of imperial designs marks her as “our mother.” Of course, “our mother” appears to be Sarah from Genesis, but I think there is a good reason Paul does not name her in his allegory. She, like Paul, has been transformed from someone who persecutes to someone who is an organizer of an alternative structure. As such, she is no longer the same old Sarah.

Roman destiny mandates that the master race is entitled to acquire all of the nations and to (re)name them. The free woman’s lack of name also means that she is an unrecognizable place, owned by no one. They cannot claim this land, this nation; Jerusalem above is out of the army’s grasp, outside of their territorial boundaries. She is beyond the inhabited world. She eludes capture and therefore is unnamed. She does not produce children for the perpetuation of the master race. And neither should her Galatian children. The free woman is the co-mother, with Paul, of the new creation, in which the circumcised Jews and uncircumcised nations are arranged in such a way that they no longer have any reason to imitate a divide-and-conquer approach to humanity. In relation to Roman imperial visual ideology, she is invisible and undetectable. In Paul’s Jewish framework

be enslaved by Rome, it is more difficult for the Greeks, the noblest and smartest of all, who are now under six Roman rods (2.365). In addition to these three formidable Greek nations now under the Roman thumb, Agrippa states that a “myriad of other nations” (ἄλλα τε ἔθνη μυρία) who have greater reasons to fight for freedom than the Jews have yielded, prompting him to ask: “and will you alone disdain to slave to those to whom all things have been subjected?” (μόνοι δ’ ὑμεῖς ἀδοξεῖτε δουλεῦν οἷς ὑποτέτακται τὰ πάντα; 2.361).

she is the Jerusalem who is the “light to the nations,” where all peoples should gather in peace and reconciliation according to First Testament prophetic rhetoric. That the two cities are women should not distract us from attention to Paul’s manipulation of gendered power relationships, as the cities represent two political choices: continuation under Roman rule (“Hagar,” slavery, natural reproduction of domination) or freedom and self-determination (“Sarah,” freedom, unnatural motherhood).

Given that the Roman imperial personification of conquered lands as women also functions as “allegory” for world domination and slavery for those defeated and their children, it follows that at stake in Paul’s story is not necessarily a degradation of the “actual” Hagar or abandonment of Judaism. Rather, the two mothers of the Galatians—Paul and Sarah—represent the fertility and abundance flowing from the freedom of “oneness in Christ,” which stands opposed to inhumane reproduction and false unification under Caesar’s self-serving interests.

Solidarity “in Christ” and the one God of Israel is expressed in the assemblage of Jews and other nations “from below” (defeated collective femininity) in defiance of Roman imperial ideology’s rendering of the whole world as one under Roman law and hierarchy. Paul presents this solidarity as gender transgression and as a unification that destabilizes the imperially gendered social, racial and cosmic order. The contrast between a paradigm of Roman domination and that of inter-national cooperation is expressed in Galatians 5 in the contrast between “works of the flesh” (including divisions and sects; cf. 5:20) and “fruits of the spirit.” New-man/mother Paul directs *his/her* Galatian children to “serve one another as slaves” (Gal 5:13) and orders them not to provoke or envy each other (Gal 5:25). If the children “bite and devour” one another, they might consume each other (Gal 5:15). Those who behave in divisive, dominating ways in imitation of imperial masculinity “will not inherit the βασιλείαν θεοῦ” (Gal 5:21). The “reign of God” is indeed a challenging inheritance: it is a “new creation” (καινὴ κτίσις) that stands against Caesar’s natural cosmic structure (Gal 6:15). In Paul’s own experience, the new creation arises once the world (κόσμος) is “crucified” to him and he to it (Gal 6:14). As a reminder that Paul is penetrable and therefore what the Romans would have considered unmasculine and perhaps even barbaric, he states that he “bears the marks of Christ” on his body (Gal 6:17). The new creation-life out of old world-death

represents a Jewish criticism of Roman cosmic order and “peace.” What is promoted as “natural” in Roman imperial ideology is thus challenged by the unnaturalness of Paul’s “good news” to the nations.

The image of solidarity and unification of Jews and other nations under the banner of Israel’s God requires non-violent cooperation, not division or assimilation. This image, according to the rhetoric of a transformed Paul, is also gendered: instead of living up to male/female imperial expectations of unequivocal domination and subordination, Paul displays uncharacteristic vulnerability. He advocates living into an-other world, the “new creation,” through international community resistance and nonconformity to the Roman world. This resistance is born of the consciousness required “in Christ” to break the cycle of violence, to turn one’s back on persecuting and ravaging others. By turning his back on violence, Paul models a kind of masculinity that defies the Roman obligation to conquer, promoting allegiance among the defeated: Jews and τὰ ἔθνη, captive women’s bodies, bound barbarians and those similarly rendered inevitably powerless by Roman might. Paul thus challenges and reconfigures his world in gendered terms that stand in contrast to those of the dominant paradigm of his time.

CONCLUSION

From a Roman imperial perspective, Paul was a member of a conquered nation. He would have seen (and experienced) the totality and forced coherence of Roman imperial ideology and its relentless imaging. When he implores the “senseless” Galatians to see differently in order to escape their state of being “bewitched” or having fallen under the “evil eye,” he entreats them to remember “it was before your very eyes” that the Christ was “openly portrayed” as crucified (Gal 3:1–2). Paul’s Galatians (north *or* south, all were “defeated” in the Roman province) did not witness Jesus’ crucifixion, but they did not have to: there were plenty of examples before *everyone’s* eyes (in real life and in stone) of capture, torture, bondage and execution of the others in the name of affirming Rome’s universal sovereignty.

A gender-critical analysis of Paul’s rhetoric in its Roman imperial and Jewish contexts raises the need both for correctives regarding the “New Perspective,” which situates Paul as a Jew among “Gentiles,” as well as for work that takes seriously a reconsideration

of the Roman Empire as the political-religious context of early Christian literature and social formation. The “New Perspective” has rightly pointed out the thorough Jewishness of Paul and the New Testament writers and “empire-critical” work has situated that Jewishness as being shaped by and responding to Roman claims of universal domination over all the nations. I submit that “traditional” cultic and theological separations are inadequate for understanding Paul’s mission to the Gentiles and alleged rejection of the Jews. However correct recent scholarship may be for re-orienting scholars and other interpreters of early Christianity, these newer lenses are not trained to “look at the pictures” or fully see how imperial power and Jewishness are linked to gendered constructions of power relationships. Further attention to how power operates on gendered and sexualized terms in the ancient context will only benefit the ongoing redescription of early Christianity (particularly as represented in the New Testament) as a series of negotiations of and resistances to the imperial project that indelibly shaped the world in which it arose. In my view, a recontextualization and re-imagination of the “Gentiles” as the feminized “nations” defeated by masculine Roman rule is just one step in this process.

Paul’s model of solidarity among Jews and other nations in opposition to divisive imperial rule, as outlined in Galatians, would have been radical in its Roman context, as the surviving visual representations from the early imperial period demonstrate. Against this background Paul’s “mission to the Gentiles” can be understood to represent a program for and among defeated nations, each of which experienced a degree of assimilation to (and humiliation by) Roman rule. Resistance and resentment among conquered “barbarians” was, of course, not unknown in Paul’s time. The Romans had persistent anxieties about the stability of their frontiers, as increased military presence makes clear. It is quite possible that they also knew that solidarity among the defeated could mark “the end of the world” as they knew it. The Emperor Nero, for example, dreamed that the statues of the nations from the theater of Pompey rose up together, surrounded him, keeping him from escaping after he had killed his mother (Suetonius, *Nero* 46). In that light, Paul’s plea for solidarity among the nations might well appear as a nightmare for those vested with and invested in imperial power.

VICE LISTS AND DEVIANT MASCULINITY:
THE RHETORICAL FUNCTION OF 1 CORINTHIANS
5:10–11 AND 6:9–10

Fredrik Ivarsson

Paul's catalogues of vices in 1 Corinthians have been thoroughly examined and discussed by modern scholarship, highlighting three main topics. First, scholars have paid attention to the general background of the New Testament catalogues of virtues and vices, with special focus on their form, *Sitz im Leben* and parallels from the history of religion. Some scholars have focused on the Greco-Roman environment,¹ while others have claimed that the Jewish parallels are more important, stressing the similarities with either Hellenistic Judaism, Qumran or the Hebrew Bible.² Second, the relationship between the vice lists and their context in 1 Corinthians has been analyzed in detail. Many commentators state that the vice lists are conventional and therefore are not intended to describe the situation in the Corinthian congregation.³ Others, however, have tried to demonstrate the contextual character of the lists by showing how the selected vices fit into Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians.⁴ Third, the meanings of *μαλακοί* and *ἀρσενοκοῖται*, two terms from the list in

¹ See especially Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (3d ed.; HNT 8; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1928), 35–36; and Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (trans. J. W. Leitch; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 100–1.

² See, respectively, Eduard Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development (Lists of Vices and House-Tables)," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black* (ed. E. Best and R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 195–209; Siegfried Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament und ihre Traditionsgeschichte unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Qumran-Texte* (BZNW 25; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959); and Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7* (AGJU 22; Leiden: Brill, 1994; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

³ For example, see Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 106; and Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 101–6.

⁴ See especially B. J. Oropeza, "Situational Immorality: Paul's 'Vice Lists' at Corinth," *ExpTim* 110 (1998): 9–10; and Peter S. Zaas, "Catalogues and Context: 1 Corinthians 5 and 6," *NTS* 34 (1988): 622–29.

1 Cor 6:9, have been thoroughly scrutinized. These words are usually taken to denote the “passive” and the “active” partner respectively in a sexual relationship between two men.⁵ This view has been modified, challenged, complicated and also defended by meticulous inquiries.⁶

By way of broadening the previous research, in the analysis that follows I will explore the rhetorical function of Paul’s vice lists in 1 Corinthians. This focus is related to the conventional or contextual nature of the lists, but I will take the discussion one step further by investigating the nature of the vices Paul enumerates and by exploring the function they have in his rhetoric. I will not enter into a full treatment of the meaning of the contested vices, although I will touch on the subject. Further, whether the background of the lists is to be found in Greco-Roman or in Jewish conventions is not all that important for my argument. Rather, it suffices to say that the form obviously could be recognized by people from both cultural environments. I will argue that the lists are contextual and, as descriptions of deviant masculinity, they are integrally related to ancient gender ideologies.

⁵ So C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (2d ed.; BNTC; London: Black, 1971), 140; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 106; and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 243–44. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 450 n. 153, lists fourteen scholars who support this interpretation. In antiquity, sexual acts were hierarchically constituted, involving an active partner, who is dominating and penetrating, and a passive partner, who is dominated and penetrated (for further discussion, see the literature in n. 7 below; cf. Diana Swancutt’s essay in this volume). For convenience, I will use the terms active and passive in this essay, bearing in mind that the modern construction of sexuality is, of course, quite different.

⁶ Scroggs, *New Testament and Homosexuality*, argues that the words refer to the partners of a certain kind of pederastic relationship. John Boswell claims that *μαλακοί* refers to general moral weakness and *ἀρσενικοῦται* to male, active prostitutes (*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980], 335–53). Dale B. Martin suggests that *μαλακοί* entails effeminacy, while *ἀρσενικοῦται* cannot be defined with any certainty, but seems to be as connected to economic vices as to sexual ones (“*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*: Meanings and Consequences,” in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* [ed. R. L. Brawley; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 117–36). John H. Elliott enumerates many different interpretations, but refuses to choose between them (“No Kingdom of God for Softies? Or, What Was Paul Really Saying? 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 in Context,” *BTB* 34 [2004]: 17–40). David F. Wright counters Boswell’s arguments about the meaning of *ἀρσενικοῦται*, concluding that the word speaks “generically of male activity with males” (“Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of *ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΑΙ* [1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10],” *VC* 38 [1984]: 125–53 [146]).

GRECO-ROMAN IDEOLOGIES OF MASCULINITY

Ideas of what it meant to be a man were woven into the fabric of Greco-Roman culture, omnipresent, yet often invisible in their self-evidence. Only recently have scholars started to direct systematic attention to this aspect of Greco-Roman culture.⁷ One structural difference from modern Western perceptions of gender is what Thomas Laqueur has labeled the one-sex model.⁸ Modern gender ideology usually considers male and female to be two opposite poles, with distinct characteristics. Ideally, a man should conform to masculine ideals and a woman to feminine ideals. But in antiquity there is only one pole, the masculine one. Men and women are arranged on the same scale of masculinity, with the manliest men at the top. Generally, women are imperfect men, but some exceptional women can be considered more masculine than the average man. Further, most males are excluded from true manliness due to their lack of freedom, education, wealth, nobility and virtue. The ground rules of Greco-Roman masculinity can thus be summarized in the following protocols:⁹

- 1) Mastery is the basic criterion of masculinity. Being fully gendered as a man, as opposed to merely having the physical features held

⁷ Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* is often used as a point of departure for such reflections (*The Use of Pleasure* [vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*; trans. R. Hurley; New York: Vintage, 1985]; and *The Care of the Self* [vol. 3 of *The History of Sexuality*; trans. R. Hurley; New York: Pantheon, 1986]). For an introduction to ancient masculinity, see Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 125–59; and Halvor Moxnes, “Conventional Values in the Hellenistic World: Masculinity,” in *Conventional Values of the Hellenistic Greeks* (ed. P. Bilde et al.; SHC 8; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1997), 263–84. Some useful anthologies on the subject include Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, eds., *Thinking Men: Masculinity and Its Self-Representation in the Classical Tradition* (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 7; London: Routledge, 1998); Lin Foxhall and John Salmon, eds., *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 8; London: Routledge, 1998); Ralph M. Rosen and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (MnSup 238; Leiden: Brill, 2003); and Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (SBLSemS 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

⁸ Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁹ These protocols represent my own attempt at summarizing the essentials of Greco-Roman masculinity, as it is described, for example, by the writers mentioned in n. 7 above. The concept of protocols comes from John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, both of whom formulate protocols of masculine sexual behavior.

- to signify a male, means being on top in relation to non-men (women, slaves, children, barbarians) and being able to control one's own passions and desires.
- 2) Manliness is an achievement and has to be constantly proven in competition with other men. Masculinity is always under construction.
 - 3) Manliness is a moral quality (cf. the double meaning of *virtus* [virtue, manliness] and ἀνδρεία [courage, manliness]). Being manly is always a positive value, even when applied to a woman. By contrast, being effeminate or soft is morally reprehensible.

The third point implies a connection between vice and deficient manliness. This connection works both ways—men belonging to groups considered not fully masculine are regularly stereotyped as lacking in virtue and freeborn citizen men charged with improper behavior may be derided as unmanly as well. The large group of not-so-manly-men can be divided into two categories, depending on their relationship to “the real men”: those who come under authority (male slaves, freeborn sons, dependent clients, defeated peoples) and deviants who defy proper authority (bandits, barbarians, heathens).¹⁰

THE USE OF VICE LISTS IN ANTIQUITY

Both the Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish background of the New Testament catalogues of virtues and vices have been thoroughly explored by previous scholars.¹¹ These studies, however, focus on the

¹⁰ The deviants are the dangerous ones, because they have masculine power and freedom, but they do not respect the laws and the gods. They are, therefore, often represented in an ambivalent way, as courageous and cowardly, generous and greedy, masculine and effeminate, fascinating and repulsive. Deviant men can be expected to transgress all kinds of boundaries, whether moral, religious, geographical or gender-related, but, at the end of the day, evil and arrogance will be punished, while the good men will prevail. The bandit stereotype is detailed by Keith Hopwood, “‘All That May Become a Man’: The Bandit in the Ancient Novel,” in Foxhall and Salmon, *When Men Were Men*, 195–204. The distinction between men under authority and deviant men is my own.

¹¹ See the classic treatments by Anton Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament: exegetisch, religions- und formgeschichtlich untersucht* (NTAbh 16.4–5; Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936); Wibbing, *Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*; and Ehrhard Kamlah, *Die Form der katalogischen Paränese im Neuen Testament* (WUNT 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964).

form, content and origins of the catalogues and not on their function, which is my concern here. Moreover, these previous analyses also lack a gender-critical perspective, in that the relationship of rhetoric to prevailing attitudes of ancient gender ideology receive no attention. In support of this latter emphasis, I will delineate ways in which vice lists are used in antiquity and how they are gendered.¹²

1) *Vices are interrelated.* The different items of a vice list do not represent divergent diseases, but different symptoms of the same disease. While the good man (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός) is characterized by virtue,¹³ vices typify the bad man and betray him to the discerning observer. Some vices are more obvious than others, the immediately visible ones being only the tip of the iceberg. As Plutarch notes, “[W]herever the frantic pursuit of wealth and pleasure, and wherever unmitigated envy, in the company of ill will or malice, take up their abode, there, on closer view, you will discover superstition lurking, with shrinking from effort, cowardice in the face of death, sudden shifting of purpose, and an empty conceit of the opinion of the world that springs from swollen vanity” (*Sera* 556b).¹⁴

Some writers offer more detailed and elaborate accounts of how the vices fit together into a grand system,¹⁵ but it is usually just taken for granted that the man who has one fault can be expected to have other shortcomings as well. Thus, a list of vices can be used to emphasize the corruption of the bad man. If one item on the list matches, the added depravity of the whole list can be associated with the culprit. Even on the rare occasion where the possibility of having some vices but not others is discussed (e.g., *T. Ash.* 2), the verdict is that

¹² As my main sources I have selected Plutarch (including Pseudo-Plutarch), Dio Chrysostom and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Plutarch (ca. 45–120 C.E.) and Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40–120 C.E.) are later contemporaries of Paul, writing for the educated elite in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Their writings can be viewed more like compendiums than original treatises per se, which makes them suitable as rough estimations of (elite, male) common sense views of Greeks under Roman rule. The dating of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is disputed and the various texts clearly include Christian interpolations, but I consider it quite safe to read the main parts as evidence of Jewish popular moral thinking in a Hellenistic environment.

¹³ Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 69.1: Virtue is the absence of vice. In *Resp.* 442e–43b, Plato lists the vices that a righteous man does not possess.

¹⁴ Translations of ancient Greek writers are taken from the Loeb Classical Library (LCL).

¹⁵ Cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.6.11–14.33; Philo, *Sacr.* 32; and the whole of Pseudo-Aristotle's *De virtutibus et vitiis*.

a few symptoms are enough to diagnose the disease, which goes by many names.¹⁶

2) *Vices corrupt men and deprive them of masculinity and leadership abilities.* Dio Chrysostom cites Socrates as listing the vices that make a man weaker than women and eunuchs, turning a king into a tyrant (*Or.* 3.33–35, 40–41). Weakness and tyranny are two negative manifestations of the lack of self-control. Men with the power to do anything (ἔξεστι πάντα ποιεῖν), but who cannot control themselves, are described in another catalogue of vices (*Or.* 62.2). They crave everything and persist in their luxurious living; they are unjust, abusive and continually enraged. This lack of self-restraint is further illustrated by the example of the infamous Sardanapallus, king of Assyria:

[T]o kingship (βασιλεία) he could lay no claim, no more than could some rotting corpse. For the fact is, he neither would nor could take counsel or give judgement or lead troops. On the contrary, it was his custom to slip away into the women's quarters in his palace and there sit with legs drawn up on a golden couch, sheltered by purple bed-hangings, just like the Adonis who is lamented by the women, his voice shriller than that of eunuchs, his neck lolling to one side, his face pale and twitching from indolence and living in the shade, his body livid, his eyes upturned as if he were being throttled—in short, one whom it would be impossible to distinguish from his concubines. (*Or.* 62.5–6)

In this context, being full of vices is presented as equivalent to behaving like a woman. A man, especially a king, must have control over himself (τὸ αὐτοῦ κρατεῖν) so that he can rule himself and others.¹⁷ Manhood always requires self-control (ἐγκράτεια), but most men are restrained also by the laws and by those who have authority over them. Kingship thus requires a form of hyper-masculinity, since everything is permissible to a ruler and he thus has to do all of the restraining for himself.¹⁸

¹⁶ For instance, the Stoics considered that the four cardinal virtues were matched by four cardinal vices. Philo thought pleasure (ἡδονή) to be the basic problem. In the *Testament of Asher* the disease is simply labeled “evil.”

¹⁷ Plato, *Gorg.* 525a, also tells us that kings are more vulnerable to vices than ordinary men.

¹⁸ Cf. *T. Jud.* 23.1, which says that licentiousness, witchcraft and idolatry are contrary to kingship. I would further note that vice lists are sometimes connected with imagery indicating that resisting vice is a masculine enterprise. Casting out vices is more important than casting out robbers (Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.16.45); gluttony

Not surprisingly, then, effeminacy (μαλακία), which is generally understood as displaying characteristics ascribed to women, is quite common in vice lists.¹⁹ Men are believed to become womanish if they associate too frequently with females. Reuben, for instance, warns his sons to protect their senses from women: “For women are evil, my children, and by reason of their lacking authority or power over man, they scheme treacherously how they might entice him to themselves by means of their looks” (*T. Reu.* 5.1).²⁰

3) *Vice lists are often used in pedagogical contexts.* The list is an instruction in correct and mature manliness, implying some immaturity among the readership. A twofold example can be found in *De liberis educandis*, where Pseudo-Plutarch uses a list of vices, which he claims to be characteristic of early manhood, as a means to instruct fathers on how to raise their sons properly.²¹ The writer states: “[T]he iniquities of early manhood are often monstrous and wicked—unlimited gluttony, theft of parents’ money, gambling, revels, drinking-bouts, love affairs with young girls, and corruption of married women. The impulses of young men should therefore be kept fettered and restrained by careful supervision” (*Lib. ed.* 12b–c).

Furthermore, fathers who neglect their educational duties will have to mourn the wrongdoings of their grown-up sons, for males who have not learned how to be men will necessarily lead decadent lives. Some will even “take to the wilder forms of evil-doing, such as adultery and bacchanalian routs, ready to pay with life itself for a

and drunkenness are ironically compared to competing in the arena (Philo, *Ebr.* 20–22); and vices are defeated by the weapons of light and righteousness (Rom 13:12–13; Polycarp, *Phil.* 4.3).

¹⁹ Cf. Xenophon, *Apol.* 19; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.16.45; Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 461a; *Sera* 556b. Philo lists the roughly equivalent words θηλυδρίαξ and θρύψις as vices (*Sacr.* 32; *Ebr.* 20–22). The femininity of vice is stressed by Philo when he describes Lady Pleasure (ἡδονή) as a seductive prostitute with eleven vices as her friends (*Sacr.* 22). Those men who are seduced by her become almost as unmanly as the Assyrian king Sardanapallus.

²⁰ Translations from the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are taken from the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (OTP). *T. Reu.* 3.2–8 mentions fornication (πορνεία) as the first and foremost of the “spirits” that corrupt young men. Reuben proceeds to confess his “great lawless act” of having intercourse with his stepmother Bilhah, but much of the blame falls on Bilhah herself and her “naked femininity.”

²¹ *De liberis educandis*, the first essay in Plutarch’s *Moralia*, is generally believed to be pseudepigraphic. However, the contents of this treatise fit well with other themes in Plutarch’s *corpus*, and its popularity indicates that the views expressed therein were widely held in antiquity.

single pleasure" (*Lib. ed.* 5b). Therefore, wise fathers should instruct their sons "by pointing out examples of men who through love of pleasure have become involved in misfortunes, and of those who, through their steadfastness, have gained for themselves approval and good repute" (*Lib. ed.* 12c). Similarly, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are directed to the sons of the twelve Israelite forefathers.²² In this context, vice lists are one of the tools used for instructing the young men to avoid all vice (e.g., *T. Reu.* 3.2–8; *T. Jud.* 16.1; 23.1–2; *T. Benj.* 8.1).²³

4) *Vice lists are axiomatic.* All the items of a vice list are value-laden and are intended to be recognized as vices by the reader. There is no need to argue that the vices belong on the list. Rather, the list can be used as a measuring rod, estimating the moral quality of persons and behaviors.

5) *Vice lists create a morally superior "us" compared to a degenerate "them."* In *Or.* 62.2–3, Dio Chrysostom contrasts most rulers, who are vicious, with his addressee (probably emperor Trajan), who in all respects is the opposite. By implication, Dio Chrysostom himself must also be reckoned among the virtuous, being hyper keen, as he is, on banishing vice and encouraging virtue. Probably most readers would prefer joining the "us" of Dio Chrysostom and Trajan rather than the "them" of the bad rulers. Moreover, as I noted earlier, the useless ruler Sardanapallus is labeled womanish in *Or.* 62.5–6, further heightening the emergent rhetorical polarization. The fact that he is also a barbarian makes him an excellent representative of the morally inferior "others."

From a Jewish perspective, both the Gentiles and apostasy are regularly associated with all sorts of vices²⁴ and Paul's catalogues in 1 Corinthians fit nicely into this pattern in particular. They resem-

²² The word used to refer to the "recipients" is τέκνα, but obviously only male children are envisaged.

²³ The instruction of sons by their fathers is a common device in Jewish Wisdom literature (e.g., Proverbs and Sirach use this device frequently). Repeatedly the sons are admonished to stay away from seductive women and excessive drinking (*Prov* 5:1–20; 6:20–7:27; 20:1; 23:26–35; *Sir* 9:2–9; 19:1–3; 31:25–30).

²⁴ I note here just a few of the many examples: *Wis* 14:22–31; *Sib. Or.* 2.254–83; 3.36–45; *T. Levi* 14.5–8; *T. Jud.* 23.1–2; *Jub.* 21.21; 23.14; *1 En.* 10.20; 91.6–7; *Philo, Conf.* 117; *Virt.* 182; *1QS* IV,9–11; *Rom* 1:29–31; *1 Pet* 4:15; Polycarp, *Phil.* 11.1–2.

ble most closely the lists in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* where idolatry (εἰδωλολατρία), fornication (πορνεία) and greed (πλεονεξία) emerge as the major structuring vices.²⁵ It is to Paul's rhetorical deployment of these vice lists that I now turn.

MASCULINITY AND VICE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 5–6

Correct and incorrect male behavior is the topic of 1 Cor 5–6, in which Paul levels severe criticism against the Corinthian men for three cases of misconduct. Starting with the most flagrant example, Paul condemns the man who has a relationship with his father's wife (1 Cor 5:1–8). Nothing is said about the woman in question and the main thrust seems to be directed against those who have failed to exercise leadership in this situation. The second instance is a court case and, as Greco-Roman tribunals were a male arena, the persons involved were certainly men (1 Cor 6:1–8). Again, criticism is directed against sins of omission as in the former instance: those who should have been wise enough to arbitrate between the Christian brothers have failed to do so. The third example concerns men who consort with prostitutes (1 Cor 6:12–20). What they do to themselves and to the body of Christ is outrageous, but what they do to the women involved seems to be irrelevant.

This preoccupation with men and male behavior is not merely accidental. In 1 Cor 7 Paul explicitly addresses men and women, but in 1 Cor 5–6 he responds to a challenge from some members who have become arrogant (4:18). Paul implies that they have questioned his authority and strayed from his ways in Christ, thinking that he would not be man enough to confront them.²⁶ Now Paul

²⁵ *T. Levi* 14.5–8; 17.11; *T. Ash.* 2.5, 8; 5.1 (cf. *T. Jud.* 17–19; *T. Dan* 5.5–7; and Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns," 195–96). We thus find in the vice lists of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* eight vices out of the ten listed in 1 Cor 6:9–10 (only μαλακοί and ἁρσενοκοίται are missing). In this light, the evaluation that "the overlap between any one of Paul's lists and any other [older] list is minimal" (Zaas, "Catalogues and Context," 623) seems a little overstated. The catalogues in *3 Bar.* 8.5 and 13.4 are also very similar to 1 Cor 5:10–11 and 6:9–10, but those may be dependent on Paul.

²⁶ I do not claim that I can reconstruct the historical situation in Corinth, because we do not know the actual situation of the Corinthian community. We only have Paul's rhetorically-shaped response to what he thought was going on (or to what he constructs as going on). The only situation I intend to describe here is the rhetorical situation seemingly implied in Paul's letter.

counter-attacks, challenging them to prove their power and their adherence to the standards of the kingdom of God (4:19–20; cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 62.5–6, on the connection between βασιλεία and masculinity). As their sole father in Christ, he can demand obedience (1 Cor 4:15–17) and, if they do not comply willingly, he will have to produce his stick (4:21). As we have seen, young men were supposed to need their fathers' attention and heed their correction.²⁷ As young men were understood to be especially vulnerable to πορνεία, but also characterized by excessive carousing and attempts at dishonest gain, Paul alludes to these conventions when he portrays the arrogant Corinthians as unruly young men and himself as their firm and benevolent father, chastening his sons and molding them into mature men in *his* image.²⁸

In 1 Cor 5–6, then, Paul makes liberal use of his stick, treating the arrogant as young men in need of chastisement. By exposing the grave consequences of their arrogance and disobedience, indicating their failure to exercise authority and church discipline, Paul demonstrates that they have not yet become men. Further, by offering moral guidance and executing judgment on the wicked, he proves that he is their legitimate father. He is the man they need to lead and guide them.

1 Corinthians 5:1–8

In 5:1 Paul lands his stick on what he considers the sorest spot of his opponents. There is fornication among them and of the most heinous kind at that. Not even the heathens accept that a man lives

²⁷ See above, especially point 3 under “The Use of Vice Lists in Antiquity.” According to *De liberis educandis*, a good father should supervise the education of his sons in person, not leaving all the responsibility to hired pedagogues (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 9d). For a thorough description of the stereotypes and presuppositions connected to young men, see Emiel Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 1993).

²⁸ I do not mean that Paul's opponents actually *were* rebellious young men, but that Paul chooses to address them *as if* they were such, as a rhetorical strategy to assert his authority over them. For that purpose he follows well-known conventions about education of children, as are described, for example, in Pseudo-Plutarch's *De liberis educandis*: “Fathers ought above all, by not misbehaving and by doing as they ought to do, to make themselves a manifest example to their children, so that the latter, by looking at their fathers' lives as at a mirror, may be deterred from disgraceful deeds and words” (*Lib. ed.* 14a). *Lib. ed.* 9a recommends that rebuke and praise be used alternately for optimal results.

with his father's wife.²⁹ According to Lev 18:8, the shame and nakedness of one's father's wife is the shame and nakedness of one's own father; an assault on her genitals is an assault on one's father's genitals. A man having sex with his father's woman is thereby dishonoring his father in the worst possible way. The act is a symbolic castration, depriving the father of virility and authority.³⁰ Thus, Paul's brief description of the Corinthian man's behavior depicts him as utterly shameless. This outrageous violation of his own father implies contempt for all law and order, decency and authority. He is thus inferior to a Gentile in this respect.

Even worse is that the man's shameless deed has exposed the shamelessness and incompetence of the arrogant would-be leaders. They should have felt shame and expelled the offender, but instead they have done nothing. The evil forces of moral chaos have penetrated the perimeter wall of the community and there is no one to defend it, no one but Paul that is. Although the arrogant think that he is far away and will not come (4:18), he is present in spirit and he has already pronounced his verdict on the felon. Paul claims that he cooperates with the power of the Lord, as they should all do, but their arrogance makes them powerless. Their condoning of the incestuous man's rebellion against his carnal father is symptomatic of their own rebellion against their spiritual father, Paul.³¹ As naive and unruly teenagers, they think that rejecting authority will make them free and powerful, but instead the opposite is true, as is evidenced by their lack of discernment and proper judgment. Paul would have them realize that wickedness is contagious and must be confronted, but they are soft on sin and therefore cannot defend the integrity

²⁹ Possibly "his father's woman" could refer to his father's concubine or female slave whom he had inherited together with the rest of his father's property. This would still be repulsive for a Torah-abiding Jew (Lev 18:8; 20:11; cf. Amos 2:7b), but could explain why such a relationship was tolerated by Greeks and Romans.

³⁰ For instance, the definite break between Absalom and his father David was not when Absalom let himself be proclaimed king or when he conquered Jerusalem and the king's palace, but when he publicly raped ten of his father's concubines. It was at this point that his rebellion had reached the point of no return (2 Sam 16:21–22). Similarly, when Reuben had slept with Bilhah, the MT text just notes that his father Israel heard about it. The LXX adds that it was evil in his eyes, to assure the reader that Israel was not shameless (i.e., as a man of honor he recognized the insult).

³¹ This connection between 4:14–21 and 5:1–8 has been overlooked by previous commentators.

of the community. Accepting Paul as their paradigm, they must excommunicate the wicked man in order to recover their own purity.³²

1 Corinthians 5:9–13

Having demonstrated that without his guidance the Corinthians are incapable of maintaining the boundaries of their community, Paul now patiently explains his earlier instructions. The prohibition on associating with fornicators cannot refer to all the fornicators in the world, says Paul—that would be absurd. Paul’s first vice list (5:10) connects fornicators with greedy and rapacious persons, as well as with idolaters (by definition, then, everyone who is not a Jew or a Christ-believer belongs to this latter group). Shunning all Gentiles would lead to a restricted and secluded life that could be perceived as cowardly. Rather, valiant and manly posture entails not associating with someone who is called a brother but who by his wickedness reveals that he properly belongs in the Gentile sphere. The second vice list (5:11) extends this Gentile status to slanderers and drunkards, juxtaposing these rather prosaic vices to idolatry and fornication. Abusive language and excessive drinking are thus signs of unholiness.³³ Anyone behaving that way has shown that he is not a brother and should be treated like a Gentile. The boundary between the drunkard and the non-drunkard is not entirely obvious, but it exists and must be defended.³⁴ To protect the community from pollution, evil men

³² The fornicator has himself stepped out of the sacred sphere and must face the consequences. By rejecting legitimate authority he has professed the Lord of Chaos. The meaning of εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός is contested. Perhaps σάρξ here has the connotation of male genitals, construed as the seat of evil desire. Elizabeth Gordon Edwards points out that σάρξ can refer to male genitals in Paul’s usage (Rom 2:28; Gal 6:13; cf. LXX Gen 17:13) (“Exploring the Implications of Paul’s Use of *Sarx* [Flesh],” in Brawley, *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality*, 69–86 [76]). Another example of corporal punishment, here located in the genitals, can be found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, where Reuben, in a discussion of fornication, says that he was punished with “a severe wound in his loins for seven months” because of his brief encounter with Bilhah, and, if his father had not prayed to the Lord on his behalf, he would have been destroyed (*T. Reu.* 1.7; *OTP*).

³³ Cf. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 9f, 13a, where it is stated that fathers are to keep sons from using foul language and engaging in excessive drinking.

³⁴ Defense of borders is a traditional male responsibility. Peter Brown’s statement regarding Ambrose could also be used in connection with Paul: “To surrender any boundary line was to court the ancient shame of the Roman male—it was to ‘become soft,’ to be ‘effeminated’” (*The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 347).

must be expelled. This requires resolution and proper judgment, which are mature and manly qualities necessary for the protection of immature members of the congregation.³⁵

1 Corinthians 6:1–8

In this passage, Paul speaks his mind quite forthrightly. Speaking of judgment, how dare the Corinthians bring their brothers before the court of the unrighteous? Showing courage (τολμάω) is normally positive, but here it is used ironically.³⁶ They think that they are behaving courageously like men, but they are not. Rather, they are again transgressing the boundaries between holy and unholy. The holy shall judge the wicked, not be judged by them.³⁷ By turning to the courts of the unrighteous, the Corinthian Christians submit to non-community authority structures. And this surrendering to wickedness affects the whole community, tearing a wound through which unrighteousness (ἀδικία) can enter the body. Those who should be defending the integrity of the body have failed to do so: obviously no one is mature and wise enough to judge between brothers.

A judge must have all the qualities of the mature man—wisdom, righteousness, temperance and courage, but, like Dio Chrysostom's Sardanapallus, the arrogant Corinthians shrink from moral leadership. They should have assumed their responsibility to judge within the community in the present as a temporal expression of their destiny to judge the world and the angels in the future.³⁸ But in their arrogance they neglect their duties and thus expose their true character. If they do not repent, this lack of proper judgment will bring punishment on the leaders of the congregation.

³⁵ Cf. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 12f–13c, on the need to protect sons from the bad influence of base men (e.g., flatterers and schoolmates who evidence depravity).

³⁶ Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 423–24.

³⁷ There is some tension between 5:12–13 and 6:2, but, as we shall see, for Paul it is important to emphasize that, although the believers will share in God's royal powers and responsibilities, they do not yet do so.

³⁸ Paul's frequent use of οὐκ οἴδατε in these chapters (5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19) implies that the Corinthians have failed to realize basic facts. Like dull and stubborn children they must be reminded over and over again.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11

The Corinthians should also realize that unrighteousness (ἀδικία) is incompatible with inheriting God's kingdom or kingship (βασιλεία). Obviously, being unrighteous disqualifies one from communion with the Righteous One. And kingship (βασιλεία) is compromised by vice.³⁹ As royal children of God, the Christ-believers are supposed to grow from immaturity to maturity, inheriting (i.e. sharing in) the kingship of their heavenly Father. Paul urges them not to be led astray, falling back into the deviance from which some of them came. The five points described above regarding the use of vice lists in antiquity all apply to Paul's third and longest list of vices (6:9–10); the ten vices are inter-related, describing a decadent way of life that some of the Corinthians had formerly led (ταῦτά τινες ᾔτε; v. 11); this way of life would make them soft and effeminate (μαλακοί), rendering them unfit for inheriting the kingdom (βασιλεία) and judging the world; the list is used in an instructional context as a warning for immature young men not to be led astray; there is no need to argue that the vices are vices, they are clearly so; and the inclusion of idolaters (εἰδωλόλατραι) stereotypes the deviants as Gentiles, Paul's regular rhetorical scapegoats used for frightening his audience.⁴⁰ Some of the Corinthians have formerly been unrighteous Gentiles, but they have been made clean, holy and righteous through the Lord Jesus Christ and the spirit of God. According to Paul, men are not delivered from vices through reason, but through divine intervention.⁴¹ God thus bestows virtues and proper masculinity through Christ.

³⁹ The notorious Sardanapallus could not lay claim to βασιλεία because of his effeminacy (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 62.5; see discussion above). And, according to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, licentiousness, witchcraft and idolatry are contrary to kingship and will result in humiliating punishment (*T. Jud.* 23.1). Fornication is another vice that makes men less than men and deprives a king of his βασιλεία (*T. Jud.* 15). Finally, the kingdom of the Lord will not be among those who commit πορνεία (*T. Benj.* 9.1).

⁴⁰ For some examples of Paul's stereotyping of Gentiles, see Rom 1:23–32; 1 Cor 5:1; 10:7–10; Gal 4:8–9; and 1 Thess 4:4–5.

⁴¹ Karl Olav Sandnes notes that Paul differs from Epictetus, Plutarch, Philo and the writer of 4 Maccabees, all of whom argue that desires must be defeated by reason (*Belly and Body in the Pauline Epistles* [SNTSMS 120; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 197–98). While that is a fair representation, even Epictetus appealed to divine help: "These things [i.e. vices] you cannot cast out in any other way than by looking to God alone, being specially devoted to Him only, and consecrated to His commands" (*Diatr.* 2.16.46).

1 *Corinthians* 6:12–20

Finally, Paul confronts the arrogant ideology of his opponents. Scholars generally agree that the line “everything is permissible for me” (πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν) in v. 12 is a Corinthian slogan, legitimizing an indulgent life style.⁴² This slogan could be seen as a claim to royal status (cf. 4:8). According to Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 62), most kings become corrupted by their power: since everything is permitted for them (πάντα ἔξεστιν), they indulge in all sorts of vices—and vices leave kings effeminate and unfit to rule. Yet, as noted earlier, the king must rule over himself to be able to rule over others. Kingship thus requires self-restraint (ἐγκράτεια). Paul makes a similar point when he agrees that everything is permissible for him, but adds that nothing should take control over him. The arrogant men think they are sovereign, but they are not. In fact, they submit to fornication when they consort with prostitutes. Paul does not use the concept of ἐγκράτεια here, though he does so elsewhere in his letter (cf. 1 Cor 7:5 [ἀκρασία]; 7:9 and 9:25 [ἐγκρατεύομαι]). But it is implicit that lack of self-restraint proves their immaturity and makes them slaves to the rule of vice and desire. According to Paul, the Christ-believers are not kings yet (4:8). They will indeed be kings, but only by sharing in the kingship of God. Thus they are under authority; they are bought at a price and their bodies belong to Christ. This image of slavery must have been offensive to free Greco-Roman men,⁴³ but Paul leaves them no choice. The only alternative they are presented with is being slaves to prostitutes.

According to Greco-Roman conventions, having extra-marital sex with non-citizen women (or men) was no threat to respectable manhood. Slaves and prostitutes (the latter were often slaves too) could be used without offence, as long as a man kept control over himself and his desires.⁴⁴ Excessive indulgence, however, would be shameful, exposing a flaw in character and self-restraint, and could easily be exploited by opponents. But a much worse assault on a man's

⁴² Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 460–61.

⁴³ Cf. Halvor Moxnes, “Asceticism and Christian Identity in Antiquity: A Dialogue with Foucault and Paul,” *JSTOT* 26 (2003): 3–29 (21). According to Moxnes, Paul destabilizes male superiority here: “Their identity as members of the (male) body of Christ in a certain way emasculated them: they could no longer be masters of their own body and express that mastery in relations with prostitutes” (26).

⁴⁴ Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 17–19.

honor would be to imply that he were sexually dominated by someone else, either a man or a woman. That was tantamount to claiming that he was no man at all. This is precisely what Paul does here. The man who unites with a prostitute joins with her in becoming one body. He becomes, in Paul's view, like her, wicked and shameless. But worse still, he belongs to her. His members, which should be Christ's members, are now hers. He is reduced to σῶμα (body), a sex slave of an evil and seductive slave woman.⁴⁵ It would be difficult for a man to fall any further away from the ideal of manliness than this.⁴⁶

VICES IN CONTEXT

The question remains, then, why did Paul enumerate these particular vices in his catalogues in 1 Corinthians? Nine out of ten vices that appear in 1 Corinthians, ἀρσενοκοῖται being the sole exception, are frequently found in contemporaneous Greco-Roman/Jewish lists. Thus, Paul's catalogues are conventional in the sense that they are clearly recognizable as vice lists. No honorable man would question the wicked nature of these vices, although many might define some of them differently.⁴⁷ A comparison with Paul's vice lists in his other letters suggests that he did not use a ready-made list in 1 Cor 6:9–10 (cf. Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21). He made a selection from a host of eligible vices, picking those that best fit his present concerns. The ten vices are chosen to demonstrate to the arrogant Corinthians that they, like young men, are endangered by these perils.

Among those who have maintained the contextuality of Paul's catalogues are Peter Zaas and B. J. Oropeza. Oropeza claims that "[t]he

⁴⁵ "Slave" is one possible meaning of σῶμα. Potential implications of this terminology are discussed by Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10–11. For similar notions in Tertullian, see Bran Windon's essay in this volume.

⁴⁶ Cf. the men of Judah's tribe who, through their wickedness, would fall from kingship to become eunuchs to Gentile women (*T. Jud.* 23.1–2).

⁴⁷ Obviously, many ancient writers would differ from Paul in the definition of πορνεία. How non-Jews would understand the word (and accusation of) εἰδωλολατρία is an intriguing question. Certainly the intellectual pagan would object to allegations of idol worship, asserting that the deity is in fact being worshipped, not the image of the deity itself.

Corinthians were committing most of the vices in these lists,”⁴⁸ yet he only gives evidence for three examples from the list in 6:9–10: πόρνοι (1 Cor 5:1–13; 6:12–20; 10:8), εἰδωλολάτραι (8:1–11:1) and μέθυσοι (11:17–34). Unlike Oropeza, Zaas appreciates the rhetorical nature of Paul’s lists of vices. For Zaas, “the catalogues are structured on the basis of Paul’s identification of sexual with religious vice, an identification which informs the whole of chapters 5 and 6.”⁴⁹ The four vices added in 6:9–10 (μοιχοί, μαλακοί, ἄρσενοκοῖται, κλέπτει) are thus not so much intended to criticize specific vices in Corinth, but to highlight this connection between sexual sin and idolatry.⁵⁰ I would go even further to argue that Paul’s catalogues are much more contextual than either Oropeza and Zaas recognize.

That Paul is warning the Corinthians not to become πόρνοι (fornicators) or εἰδωλολάτραι (idolaters) is obvious and Oropeza correctly points out the polemic against μέθυσοι (drunkards). Some commentators also recognize that in 6:1–8 Paul is attacking some Corinthian men for being πλεονέκται (greedy) and ἄρπαγες (rapacious).⁵¹ Μοιχοί (adulterers) is an amplification of πόρνοι, but also a subject that Paul addresses in chapter 7.⁵² Κλέπτει (thieves) is an amplification of πλεονέκται and ἄρπαγες,⁵³ while λοῖδοροι (slanders) seems to be linked with μέθυσοι, but may also be related to Paul’s enigmatic words in 12:3 about cursing Jesus. If that is the case, we might have an amplification here too, moving from μέθυσοι to λοῖδοροι.⁵⁴ The remaining two words, μαλακοί and ἄρσενοκοῖται, are often seen as elaborations of πόρνοι.⁵⁵ That might be so, but I think there is more to it than this.

For instance, μαλακοί is often interpreted as representing passive male homosexuals,⁵⁶ yet, as Dale Martin has convincingly argued, this is an interpretation prompted more by modern sexual ideology

⁴⁸ Oropeza, “Situational Immorality,” 10. Oropeza includes 1 Cor 3:3–4, 10:6–10 and 13:4–7 in his categorization of vice lists.

⁴⁹ Zaas, “Catalogues and Context,” 625.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 628.

⁵¹ Cf. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 224.

⁵² These words, πόρνοι and μοιχοί, are also linked in *T. Ash.* 2.8.

⁵³ These three vices are associated in *T. Ash.* 2.5.

⁵⁴ *T. Jud.* 14.8 also connects μέθυσοι and λοῖδοροι.

⁵⁵ Cf. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 106; Zaas, “Catalogues and Context,” 628; and Schweizer, “Traditional Ethical Patterns,” 196.

⁵⁶ See especially Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 106; Barrett, *1 Corinthians*, 140; Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 243–44; BAGD s.v.; *EDNT* s.v.; Jerusalem Bible; and the New American Bible. The words homosexual (noun) and homosexuality reflect modern constructions

than by textual evidence.⁵⁷ When *μαλακός* is used pejoratively for a man in ancient texts, it means he is being depicted as effeminate. The “soft” man lacks masculine posture, courage, authority and self-restraint; he is like a woman. One aspect of this softness is penetrability. The effeminate man can also be expected to behave like a woman in bed, allowing himself, in the not too subtle words of Plutarch, “to be covered and mounted like cattle” (*Amat.* 751d–e).⁵⁸ The act of males being penetrated, especially male citizens, could be a cause or a symptom of effeminacy.⁵⁹ The penetrated male is of course *μαλακός*, but being *μαλακός* does not necessarily imply being penetrated. Being slow to anger, inclined to studies or too fond of intercourse with women can also accrue for one the nickname *μαλακός*.⁶⁰ Thus, sexual submission is not the *meaning* of the word *μαλακός*, but one possible connotation. This connotation does not often seem to be intended in vice lists,⁶¹ but in 1 Cor 6:9 it probably is. In ancient polemic, as in many modern discourses, deriding the manliness of one’s opponent is a common tactic. Successfully labeling another man effeminate, frequently with more or less open allegations of sexual passivity, is an effective way for a dominant male to demonstrate his own masculinity.⁶² This tactic was not foreign to Paul, as is demonstrated in Gal 5:12, where he wishes that his opponents would castrate themselves. Thereby he insinuates that

of sexual identity. Thus, using them in an ancient context is anachronistic (to my understanding, the adjective homosexual can be used without anachronism, though with some caution), for which reason I will only do so when representing the viewpoints of other writers.

⁵⁷ Martin, “*Arsenokoitês* and *Malakos*,” 124–28.

⁵⁸ This quote effectively exposes the misogyny inherent in the ancient condemnation of male sexual passivity. The interlocutor in this dialogue on the pros and cons of pederasty has an even lower opinion of women, stating that “it is not gentlemanly or urbane to make love to slave boys: such a love is mere copulation, like the love of women” (751b).

⁵⁹ Cf. Plutarch, *Quaest. rom.* 274d; *Amat.* 751d–e; *Ti. C. Gracch.* 4.4; Diogenes Laertius (*Cleanthes*) 7.173; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.2.4; and Philo, *Spec.* 3.39–40.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 7.2.4; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 66.25; and Plutarch, *Amat.* 751a–b.

⁶¹ Cf. Xenophon, *Apol.* 19; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.16.45; and Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 461a; *Sera* 556b.

⁶² One example among many is Plutarch’s description of Gaius Gracchus (*Ti. C. Gracch.* 4.4). Gaius is repeatedly depicted as a strong and vigorous speaker, which is corroborated by an anecdote where he attacks an effeminate enemy by wittily suggesting that the opponent was less a man than Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.

they are behaving like eunuchs rather than real men. Unlike Paul, they lack the courage to risk persecution (cf. Gal 5:11, 6:12); they are effeminate cowards. In 1 Corinthians, Paul plays the same game with his opponents, just a little more subtly.

How, though, could the Corinthian men be accused of effeminacy? We have seen how Paul in 1 Cor 5–6 attacks the arrogant leaders' lack of authority over other men in the congregation. Another deficiency concerns their women. Paul's much-debated statements on women's behavior might be aimed more at the men than at the women. When he says he wants them to know that man is the head of woman (11:3), the irony is stinging. Of course, everyone knew that men were supposed to have authority over women; that is what patriarchy is all about. Paul pretends, however, that he must teach the men this basic fact. They are not real men yet if they do not even understand that they are shamed by the shameless dress code of their women. In fact, they could just as well be wearing their hair long if they cannot control their women's behavior and safeguard female modesty (11:14). In 14:33–35, Paul returns to the issue of women, shame and lack of proper authority: clearly the men could not make their women submit to their authority.⁶³ Paul therefore has to intervene and remind them of what the law and the customs of all decent people demand. This concern about women's behavior frames Paul's instructions relating to appropriate conduct in the congregation, which reveals the rhetorical weight of this particular argument. This frame regarding men's authority over women in the congregation is itself framed by references to Paul's own authority over the congregation (11:1; 14:37–38). He is the man and the effeminate Corinthian leaders are women in relation to him, which is demonstrated by their failure to be men in relation to their women.⁶⁴

⁶³ According to Plutarch (*Amat.* 753–54), when men are exploited by women, it is through their own weakness and softness (μαλακία).

⁶⁴ The importance of gender ideology in 1 Cor 11–14 is further evidenced by Paul's frequent use of markers depicting opponents and opposing views and practices as effeminate; they are weak-minded pagans (12:2), decadent musical instruments used by eunuch priests in the cult of the Mother Goddess (13:1; cf. Zenobios, nicknamed μαλακός, who is playing τύμπανον καὶ κύμβαλα καὶ κρόταλα, according to P. Hibeh 1.54.11–13 [Adolf Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten: Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* {4th ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1923}, 130–31]), indistinct trumpet signals preventing men from getting ready for battle (14:8), unintelligible barbarian babble (14:11), children in understanding (14:20) and maniacs (14:23).

Now we are only left with ἀρσενοκοῖται, the most controversial and contested vice for modern readers of Paul. With the scarce evidence we have regarding the use of this word, no definite judgment can be made about its meaning. Some male-on-male sexual activity is most probably denoted, but the precise nuance eludes us. There are two main arguments supporting the most common interpretation of male active homosexuals. Neither is entirely satisfying. The argument from etymology claims that the word derives from the LXX version of Lev 18:22 and 20:13, where “lying down with a man as [one would lie down] with a woman” (μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικός) is condemned.⁶⁵ This might be the case. But, as Martin remarks, the etymology of a word is its history not its meaning.⁶⁶ More often than not, the exact connotation of a word changes over time. Thus, the etymology of ἀρσενοκοίτης can give us a clue about possible meanings of the word, but it cannot tell us the precise sense of the word in Paul’s usage.

The second argument concerns the relation between ἀρσενοκοῖται and the immediately preceding μαλακοί. If the soft one is the passive partner, the ἀρσενοκοίτης is presumably the active partner. This provides us with a neat condemnation of all male homosexual activities, which fits nicely into the modern debate on homosexuality.⁶⁷ Yet Paul did not address modern concerns. In the context of our analysis of Paul’s rhetorical use of this vice list, I would suggest that ἀρσενοκοῖται is more likely a derogatory way of referring to sexually dominated males.⁶⁸ I will briefly state three reasons for this inference. First,

⁶⁵ This phrase is usually taken to refer to the active partner. But it has also been suggested that in the Hebrew *Vorlage* it originally referred to the passive partner (Jerome T. Walsh, “Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: Who is Doing What to Whom?,” *JBL* 120 [2001]: 201–9).

⁶⁶ Martin, “*Arsenokoitēs* and *Malakos*,” 119.

⁶⁷ Of course, this argument presupposes a certain stereotype of male same-sex relationships. When ἀρσενοκοῖται is interpreted in 1 Cor 6:9 as referring to active male homosexuals, but in 1 Tim 1:10 as referring generically to all (male) homosexuals, a bias towards modern relevance might be suspected (see, e.g., Chrys C. Caragounis, *Homoerotik: I förntid och nutid—och den kristna församlingen* [Hanninge, Sweden: XP Media, 2000], 65–68).

⁶⁸ Certainly there are more possibilities than just active or passive male homosexual behavior. As mentioned in n. 6 above, Boswell argues that the ἀρσενοκοῖται were active male prostitutes, while Martin considers some kind of economic exploitation by sexual means more likely. Other possible interpretations include homosexual rape, intercourse with male slaves, intercourse with grown-up (citizen) men or corruption of (citizen) boys. These are activities that could be condemned by Greco-Roman or Hellenistic Jewish moralists.

according to my fourth thesis on the general use of vice lists, Paul must assume that all the recipients of his letter will agree that being an ἄρσενοκοίτης is morally reprehensible. That could possibly be the case concerning pederasts, but from a Gentile point of view the condemnation of penetrated men would be more self-evident.⁶⁹ Second, the structure we found in the list of 6:9–10 makes an amplification of the sexual connotation of μαλακοί more logical than if ἄρσενοκοίτης were simply a complement. If the equal condemnation of passive and active partners were the most likely combination in an ancient context, we would expect to find this in contemporary vice lists, but I am not aware of any such example. Third, Paul's depiction of his Corinthian opponents as arrogant young men would make the hint of the peril of suffering penetration more understandable, since that was a widely recognized danger for males in the process of coming of age.⁷⁰ Admittedly, these arguments are far from conclusive. Still, considering the lack of hard evidence, this particular reading offers another viable avenue of exploration.

CONCLUSION

Important aspects of Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians can be overlooked if we do not pay heed to ancient gender ideology. In this essay I have demonstrated how Paul counters a challenge to his authority by treating his Corinthian opponents as arrogant young men. The vice lists in 5:10–11 and 6:9–10 can be understood as carefully crafted rhetorical devices, pointing out the dangers of youthful arrogance. These specific vices were considered especially threatening

⁶⁹ Rom 1:27 might suggest that Paul himself considered suffering penetration the most repulsive aspect of male-male intercourse ("receiving *in themselves* the due penalty for their error"). The phrase ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν indicates that Paul is presupposing active and passive male partners. By playing the active part these Gentiles commit shameless acts (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι) and, as their proper punishment, they also perform the passive part, thus receiving the penalty (τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες).

⁷⁰ Alan Booth offers many examples of this potential threat ("The Age for Reclining and Its Attendant Perils," in *Dining in a Classical Context* [ed. W. J. Slater; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991], 105–20). One more example is found in Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 11d–12a. When Polycarp (*Phil* 5.3) exhorts younger men to abstain from all evil, he makes a selective quote from 1 Cor 6:9, indicating that he considered young men especially at risk of becoming πόρνοι, μαλακοί and ἄρσενοκοίται.

to young men and Paul portrays them all as being operative in the Corinthian congregation. Thus, in Paul's depiction, the arrogant men must stop revolting against their spiritual father. They can only grow up to mature men, capable of leadership and proper judgment, if they submit to Paul's authority and accept his guidance. Otherwise they will certainly fall into deviance and fail to inherit the kingship and kingdom of their heavenly father. This rhetorical strategy runs all through 1 Corinthians, from Paul's earlier exposure of Corinthian immaturity (1:10–12, cf. 3:1–4) to his concluding exhortation that they must exhibit the qualities of *real* men (16:13), thereby linking parts of Paul's argument that have often been considered only loosely related.

NOVEL MEN:
MASCULINITY AND EMPIRE IN MARK'S GOSPEL
AND XENOPHON'S *AN EPHESIAN TALE**

Eric Thurman

As classicist Carlin Barton comments with respect to the beginning of the shift from the Republic to the Principate, “[a]t the height of their power, the proud confederacy of warrior chieftains that had conquered the Mediterranean lost its sovereignty to the first in a line of ‘soft men’: Julius Caesar. The Julius Caesar who conquered the conquerors was the culmination *and the negation* of the Roman warrior’s code with its model of the *vir gravis*.”¹ Caught in the feedback loop of imperialism, which now threatened to subject those at the center as it had the surrounding *oikoumene*, elite Roman males discovered that political autocracy occasioned the implosion of masculinity, an internal collapse of male boundaries that was registered in the metropolis by both capricious emperors and compelling gladiators and on empire’s margins (literally and metaphorically) by both duplicitous bandits and depraved barbarians.² Within this shifting political context, traditional stereotypes of manliness become destabilized. “All things,” observes an anonymous Augustan poet, “beseem

* Thanks to Stephen Moore, Virginia Burrus, Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner for their patient reading of and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

¹ Carlin A. Barton, “‘All Things Beseem the Victor’: Paradoxes of Masculinity in Early Imperial Rome,” in *Gender Rhetorics: Postures of Dominations and Submission in History* (ed. R. Trexler; Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1994), 83–92 (87–88).

² On gladiators and emperors, see Carlin A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11–46. On bandits, see Keith Hopwood, “‘All That May Become a Man’: The Bandit in the Ancient Novel,” in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (ed. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon; Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society 8; New York: Routledge, 1998), 195–204. On sexual stereotypes of both northern and eastern “barbarians,” see the brief discussion by Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 66–80.

the victor at the conclusion of war.”³ In this way, Roman imperialism represented both the logical conclusion and the paradoxical undoing of the equation of domination and manhood in antiquity.

FICTIONS OF EMPIRE

While an imperial male imagination could appropriate “all things,” even the symbols of a “slavish” and “effeminate” victimage, to mark its own sense of colonial ambivalence, the contradictions within the discourses of empire and masculinity also afforded space for anti-colonial resistance, especially under conditions that rendered more conventional (and conventionally masculine) forms of political and military action undesirable or all but impossible. For instance, as Virginia Burrus argues, early Christian males writing in a social context of state persecution produced a “new masculine authority” in the figure of the martyr. She describes how the textual appropriation of the “torturable and suffering female body” of the ideal martyr disrupted traditional discourses of gender and slavery, the social hierarchies central to colonial domination, while paradoxically reinforcing the status of both women and slaves as “others” over against which free men still defined themselves. Early martyrologies constructed a resistant male subject who was in principle “more fluid, able to encompass and turn to strategic advantage stances marked as ‘feminine,’ such as embodiment, passibility, and even penetrability”;

³ Quoted in Barton, “All Things Beseem the Victor,” 89 (cf. her following comments: “Now everyone was relieved of the necessity—or freedom—of *gravitas*. In the besieged city one could sport. Now the ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ were equally weightless. The Roman male, liberated from rigid masculine sex roles, delights in the freedom of playing a slave or a woman” [92]). Karen Bassi discusses a similar destabilization of manliness during the “transition from an individual martial ethos to a collective political one” as described in fifth- and fourth-century B.C.E. classical Greek texts (“The Semantics of Manliness in Ancient Greece,” in *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* [ed. R. M. Rosen and I. Sluiter; MnSup 238; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 25–58). Though these and other examples might be read as symptomatic of “masculinity in crisis,” Abigail Solomon-Godeau rightly cautions that “there is ample evidence to suggest that there never is, never was, an unproblematic, a natural, or a crisis-free” variant of masculinity. Masculinity, she says, is “like capitalism, *always* in crisis. And the real question is how both manage to restructure, refurbish, and resurrect themselves for the next historical turn” (“Male Trouble,” in *Constructing Masculinity* [ed. M. Berger, B. Wallis and S. Watson; New York: Routledge, 1995], 69–76 [70–71]).

by doing so, she argues, these texts also anticipate a later historical moment in which agents of “imperial orthodoxy” would invoke the “privileges of both political power and persecuted witness.”⁴ Though definitions of manliness were expanded and changed by politicized Christian discourse, these shifts took place within broader patterns of cultural self-definition in the early imperial period.

Jewish texts from the same period, for example, similarly invoke gendered tropes of colonial domination and resistance while at the same time articulating distinctive subaltern identities. Select moments in the Talmud, Daniel Boyarin argues, “provided the cultural models and resources around which the self-representation of a gentle, recessive, nonviolent, masculinity could crystallize under specific material and historical conditions.” Writing under the specific conditions of a colonized subculture, Jewish males produced this ideal, epitomized by the “feminized” scholarly rabbi, as an expressed alternative to the dominant Roman cultural codes of “masculine” action and aggression, as well as “feminine” passivity and submission, which, as Boyarin suggests, offered a system “succinctly symbolized by the imperial phallus.”⁵

Another Jewish text addressing themes of assimilation and resistance, 4 Maccabees, likewise deliberately denaturalized traditional gendered constructs as a key strategy for simultaneously opposing and appropriating the dominant Hellenistic culture. According to Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, 4 Maccabees “both subverts and supports the ancient hegemonic construction of masculinity” as resistance to political and cultural oppression is played out on the bodies of defiant Jewish (proto)martyrs.⁶ Recent work on masculinity by classical scholars, Moore and Anderson point out, has emphasized that hegemonic discourse on manliness, which comes to

⁴ Virginia Burrus, “Torture and Travail: Producing the Christian Martyr,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Patristic Period* (ed. A.-J. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; FCNTECW; New York: T&T Clark International and Cleveland: Pilgrim, forthcoming). For readings of early Christian masculinity constructed in the (proto)martyr text of Revelation, see Stephen D. Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor and Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 173–200; and Chris A. Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

⁵ Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Contraversions 8; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 82.

⁶ Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, “Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 249–73 (251).

explicit expression in philosophical texts from classical Greece, posits self-mastery (*enkrateia*)—the mastery of one's own passions—as an enabling condition for elite free males to exercise social and political mastery over subordinates like women, slaves and provincial subjects.⁷ Like other fictional and philosophical texts from the early imperial period, however, 4 Maccabees deliberately reconfigures notions of self-mastery by championing as paragons of masculine virtue the unlikely figures of the elderly Eleazar, seven young boys and their unnamed mother, all of whom are positioned in contrast to Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian tyrant. “The ‘weak’ defeat the ‘strong,’ and self-mastery displaces political mastery of others as a defining male trait,” argue Moore and Anderson, although by effectively unmanning and defeating Antiochus the association of masculinity with domination nevertheless remains unquestioned.⁸ Similarly noting how gender inversions are occasioned by the political reversals desired by 4 Maccabees, classicist Brent Shaw describes the more wide-ranging shift in the discourse of masculinity visible in the texts surveyed thus far. Across select Christian, Jewish and “pagan” texts from the early imperial period, he says, one can trace “the conscious production of a rather elaborate conception of passive resistance. Or, to put it more honestly, perhaps the explicit co-optation of passivity in resistance has a fully legitimized male quality—a choice that could be made by thinking, reasoning and logical men.”⁹

Ancient Greek romances, written contemporaneously with the colonial Christian and Jewish texts described above, provide another important register of the changing styles of male self-fashioning produced under the pressures of imperial rule.¹⁰ Participating with other

⁷ Ibid., 250, 257–59. For a more extensive survey of classical scholarship on ancient masculinity, see Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor*, 135–46.

⁸ Moore and Anderson, “Taking It Like a Man,” 272–73.

⁹ Brent Shaw, “Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *J ECS* 4 (1996): 269–312 (280).

¹⁰ Ancient romances constitute a sub-genre of the ancient novel and I will restrict the term to this group. Ancient literary theory has no single generic concept for the texts now recognized as “ancient novels,” but the terms “romance” and “novel” are still preferable to others, even if somewhat anachronistic and occasionally imprecise. For brief discussions of ancient literary theory with respect to the “novels,” see Glen W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Sather Classical Lectures 58; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10–19; and Christine Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 94–97; 101–4.

novelistic literature in a broader culture of shared discourses on masculinity and empire, this sub-genre of the ancient novel emerges from the margins of a “multiracial, multilingual, mixed Mediterranean” milieu, while writing itself into the complex cultural legacy of “Hellenism” valorized at the heart of the Roman cultural and political landscape. Remarkable for remembering “that there was a cultural tradition aside from and before the Romans, and thus cultural alternatives, stretching back to before the post-Alexander hegemony of the Greek-speaking world,” ancient romances self-consciously attempt to reimagine Greek “cultural” identity after the coming of Roman “power” as part of the larger revival of Greek literature known as the “Second Sophistic.”¹¹

Roman political hegemony at once necessitated and enabled the creative redefinition of what it meant to be “Greek” and to whom “being Greek” mattered. The negotiations of Greek identity belong to a “new-style Hellenism” whose “multicultural” hybridity not only prompted nostalgic attempts to preserve the signs of a “pure” Hellenic pedigree, especially evident in the aesthetic penchant for “Atticizing” speech and prose, but also invited revisionary interpretations of canonical literature that denaturalized the connection between Greece and being Greek, geography and identity. In the ancient romance, “Hellenism” could be as encompassing as the empire and as eclectic as the novelistic genre itself.¹²

It is thus not surprising to discover that, when read in this light, ancient Greek romances are found to be particularly notable for using tropes of eroticized resistance, especially virginity, to figure Greek identity under empire.¹³ Embodying the idealized self-image of the urban elite, the handsome youth and beautiful maiden who

¹¹ Margaret Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 18, 26. Classicist Tim Whitmarsh discusses the value of modern theories of “culture” and “power” for studying classical antiquity, questioning their easy separation while insightfully remarking on how Roman “Greeks” invented the distinction (*Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 1–38).

¹² Recent interpretations of the ancient romance that highlight its complex relationship to Roman imperialism include the following: Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 101–31; Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 78–87; Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 29–54; and Virginia Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins: Colonial Ambivalence and the Ancient Romance,” *Arethusa* 38 (2005): 49–88.

¹³ On this feature, see Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins.”

take center stage in the plot of romance typically make mutual vows of loyalty and chastity that are repeatedly subjected to the tempting offers and threatening demands of an exotic and often violent world beyond the *polis*. As they undergo numerous “erotic sufferings” (cf. Chariton 1.1.1) during their separation and reunion, these vulnerable virgins lose the security and privileges afforded by their elite status, largely due to repeated enslavements, a recurring motif throughout the sub-genre. Stripped of their freedom and resources, they are provoked to performances both of surprising resistance and melodramatic helplessness that denaturalize gender roles associated with an earlier, classical aristocratic culture.¹⁴ “In the Greek romances,” observes David Konstan, “sighs, tears, and suicide attempts are as characteristic of the male as of the female in distress; ruses, disguises, and outright violence in defense of one’s chastity are as much the part of the female as of the male.”¹⁵ Like ancient Christian and Jewish novelistic texts, the ancient romance participates in the “explicit co-optation of passivity in resistance” by constructing a distinctive counter-heroic subject, one who takes up the non-aggressive stance of the self-controlled Stoic sage, while also undergoing (sometimes playfully) exaggerated extremes of passive suffering and passionate emotional expression that complicate the moral value of masculine self-mastery.¹⁶ Alternately a cowering captive or a steel-nerved slave,

¹⁴ Contrasts with the honor-seeking, aggressively competitive warriors of Homeric epic are also sharply drawn: Chaereas, the hot-headed husband of Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, prepares to lead a warship in search for his captured wife, only to face his mother who, like Hecuba when pleading with Hector in the *Iliad*, bears her breasts and cries, “Respect these, and pity me, since I once offered you the soothing bosom” (*Chaer.* 3.5.6 [LCL]; cf. *Iliad* 22.82–83). Unlike Hector, Chaereas “was broken by the supplications of his parents” and, in a decidedly unheroic gesture, “threw himself from the ship into the sea, wishing to die so that he might escape the alternatives either of not pursuing Callirhoe or of giving pain to his parents” (*Chaer.* 3.5.6).

¹⁵ David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8. Konstan argues that such gender role reversals represent an innovative attempt to create equality between the sexes in erotic relationships. For a critique of Konstan’s view of “sexual symmetry,” see Burrus, “Mimicking Virgins.”

¹⁶ Clitophon, the helpless hero of Achilles Tatius’s *Leucippe and Clitophon*, provides a telling example. At one point he is assaulted by an outraged husband who pummels him to the ground. Clitophon says that “I forbore to defend myself, though it was well within my power. When we at last grew tired—he of beating me steadily and I of bearing it philosophically—I got up” and addressed the man. The man again proceeds to beat and then bind the hero (5.23). Judith Perkins insightfully

the male subject of romance, according to Katherine Haynes, enacts a particular “fantasy of powerlessness” for the pleasure of the Greek male reader feeling “unmanned” by Roman rule.¹⁷

Unlike the socially and politically subversive scenarios imagined in Christian and Jewish novels, however, the “fantasy” of the ancient romance is frequently placed within a conservative ideological trajectory. Locating *paideia* and literary refinement at the epicenter of identity, the Greek elite are often described as practicing a collaborative “cultural” politics, which is then contrasted with the more radical “religious” politics of liberation associated with certain Christian and Jewish texts, including the Gospels. Seeing the ancient romance as “the narrative embodiment of an elite wish fulfillment dream,” Judith Perkins argues that the inviolable bodies of the romance couple “passed through suffering but bore no mark that they had experienced it,” demonstrating the power of mind-over-matter endurance as they providentially regain their free status and fulfill the desire of the elite for an unadulterated social body.¹⁸

observes that, “by describing his lack of action with the word *philosophon*, Clitophon related his ‘passivity’ to a philosophic context where his refusal to become angry and retaliate made perfect sense. Clitophon’s passivity in this episode ought to be interpreted as simply a narrative display of the behavior constructed and valorized in philosophic exhortations of the period,” meaning Stoicism in particular (*The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* [New York: Routledge, 1995], 91). By persuasively aligning the romance hero’s passivity with the Stoic practice of non-violence, Perkins clearly advances the interpretation of the ancient romance over earlier, dismissive readings. Yet the didactic purpose she ascribes to the sub-genre perhaps underplays the author’s penchant for parody and literary play. Unlike Perkins, Katherine Haynes spies an “extreme and somewhat subversive version of the ideal” of self-mastery at work in this and similar scenes. Haynes attributes this effect to the entertainment value provided by “a deliberately distorted version of ideal masculinity that reaffirmed specific cultural values at the same time as it undermined other traditional sexual constructs” (*Fashioning the Feminine in the Greek Novel* [New York: Routledge, 2003], 95, 99).

¹⁷ Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine*, 99. Though scholars have investigated how the powerless yet resilient heroine captivates male characters and readers alike as an object of erotic attraction and identification, so becoming available as a sign of “feminized” virility, Haynes intriguingly implies that similar ideological work is performed by representations of male suffering, a point I will develop more fully herein. For elite males under imperial rule, Haynes suggests that “[t]he victory of the disempowered hero over the traditionally aggressive male, though not perhaps as subversively satisfying as that of the heroine, is rendered more delicious with each successive proof of apparent feminisation” (99).

¹⁸ Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 46, 75. On the elite social perspective of the romances, see 42, 47, 75. On the “social utility” of male virginity, see 67. Also see Perkins’s essay in this volume.

By contrast, Perkins argues, early Christian narratives “were rigorously anti-social, unremittingly opting for the dissolution of social categories and relationships”; by “representing pain as empowering and death as victory” these texts constructed a militantly oppositional version of the “suffering self” whose body, broken by the power of the Roman state, testified to the hope for an alternative “social body extended beyond life’s natural limits” through the power of resurrection.¹⁹ Michael Vines highlights similar ideological differences between the ancient romance and the earliest Christian narrative, the Gospel of Mark: “it is the apocalyptic perspective that makes Mark’s story qualitatively different from the Greek novel,” which is “essentially bourgeois entertainment” with “characters [who] persist in piety and passively wait for their fortunes to change.” “Christian and Jewish literature,” he says, “typically involves a more active response to hostile circumstances” in which “God’s people cry out for divine deliverance, and live in expectation of it.”²⁰

When thus contrasted, a clearly marked gap opens between collaborationist “pagan” and nonconformist Christian narratives and the gendered subjects they construct. On the one hand, Greek romances appear to construct a classically impenetrable and self-controlled “masculine” subject that is associated with social dominance; on the other, Christian narratives appear to construct an alternative male subject willing to represent itself, passionately and paradoxically, as “suffering” and “feminized” in its aggressive defiance of the dominant social order. On the present reading, then, Greek romances and Christian narratives thus offer sharply opposed social and political agendas that in part are embodied by radically different male subjects. Within this neat opposition, however, significant similarities between the colonial (and colonized) male subjects constructed in Greco-Roman and early Christian (novelistic) texts may be overlooked. Keeping in play the important differences between “pagan” and Christian texts and political strategies, in this essay I seek to innovate by contending that valorized male suffering represents a moment of ideological overlap between the gospel genre and the ancient romance as each produce an ambivalent masculine subject as an effect of colonial domination.

¹⁹ Ibid., 26, 119.

²⁰ Michael E. Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre: The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish Novel* (SBLAB 3; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 20–21, 130.

Indeed, it might be that scenes of male suffering that call into question the ancient binary of “feminine” passivity and “masculine” activity can also be read across gospel and ancient romance texts as unexpected moments of colonial resistance that confound the easy distinction between “passive” “pagan” conservatism and “active” Christian radicalism. As texts that notably plot suffering for colonial male subjects as the providential will of the divine order, both the gospel and the romance may not only expose the arbitrary nature of imperial order (when the violence at its foundation comes into focus), but they may also (unconsciously) reveal the nature of the divine order to be equally, if differently, inscrutable and irresistible. On a comparative reading, then, the extreme shattering of the male subject in early Christian literature perhaps makes explicit and intensifies aspects of Greco-Roman romances’ already ambivalent views of political domination and resistance, empire and providence. Conversely, these ancient romances may complicate strategies used in Christian texts to oppose the colonial social order by displacing the “political” onto the “personal” through the trope of threatened virginity. As both the youth and maiden defend themselves from sexual assault in the romance plot, virginity becomes the privileged site for defining identity, even though their acts of resistance frequently blur the line between confronting and colluding with the agents of their oppression. Reading the construction of male subjects across ancient narratives may likewise blur the line between Christian and “pagan” strategies of resistance by exposing a similar ambivalence toward the colonial social order in early Christian texts.

To explore the possibility of such an interpretation, herein I chart the ideological coordinates of “empire” and “gender” as they intersect on a map of ancient religious discourses constructed with two ancient novelistic texts and two contemporary questions: What might recent scholarly discourses on empire and masculinity tell us about *the* canonical “suffering self,” namely Jesus of Nazareth, whose torture and execution by the Roman state are the central preoccupation of the earliest Christian narrative, the Gospel of Mark? Conversely, what might the novelistic representation of Jesus’ suffering, when juxtaposed with an early and paradigmatic romance, *An Ephesian Tale* by Xenophon of Ephesus, tell us about colonial domination and resistance, masculinity and empire, in antiquity? By addressing such questions of ideology directly I follow new trails in the interpretation of ancient narratives.

Comparisons between the Gospel of Mark and ancient fiction typically address formal literary questions in Gospel studies.²¹ Closer to my approach here are those scholars who place ancient romances and other popular novels alongside contemporary Christian and Jewish narratives in order to compare specific aspects of religious and cultural identities.²² My reading of Mark's Gospel and Xenophon's romance aims to contribute to this trend by highlighting how empire and masculinity intersect in the distinctively literary politics of the Gospel of Mark. As a deliberately comparative interpretation, I will also offer an alternative approach to recent work on early Christian masculinity²³ as well as to recent postcolonial interpretations of the Gospels.²⁴

Long-scorned for its amateurish literary achievements, the early second-century c.e. *Ephesian Tale* not only shares important literary features with the gospel genre, but it also contains some revealing dramatic parallels, especially to Mark's passion narrative. Most interestingly, Xenophon, like Mark, concludes his hero's fated suffering

²¹ Cf. Lawrence Wills, *The Quest for the Historical Gospel: Mark, John, and the Origins of the Gospel Genre* (London: Routledge, 1997), 12: "The relation of the gospel to the novel is mainly in the area of technique, in the description of the individual, character, and psychology, as Erich Auerbach saw fifty years ago." Vines provides a more extensive comparison (*Problem of Markan Genre*, 17–21, 126–31). Both, however, draw on Mary Ann Tolbert's pivotal book, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), esp. 55–79, where she details important "linguistic, stylistic, and rhetorical characteristics" shared by the Gospel of Mark and the ancient romance, using the *Ephesian Tale* as a prime example (78). In a footnote (215 n. 66), Tolbert compares prayers made by Mark's Jesus and Xenophon's Habrocomes as examples of interior monologues; this observation provided the initial inspiration for this present essay.

²² Perkins (*Suffering Self*) and Burrus ("Mimicking Virgins") provide the most immediate models for the approach taken in this essay.

²³ For an overview and bibliography, now see Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, eds., *New Testament Masculinities* (SBLSemS 45; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). Also relevant are Jerome Neyrey, "'Despising the Shame of the Cross': Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative," *Semeia* 69 (1996): 113–37; idem, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), esp. 139–63; and John Pilch, "Death with Honor: The Mediterranean Style Death of Jesus in Mark," *BTB* 25 (1995): 65–70. I engage both Neyrey and Pilch below.

²⁴ Tat-siong Benny Liew, *The Politics of Parousia: Reading Mark Inter(con)textually* (BibInt Series 42; Leiden: Brill, 1999); Simon Samuel, "The Beginning of Mark: A Colonial/Postcolonial Conundrum," *BibInt* 10 (2002): 405–19; and Stephen D. Moore, "Mark and Empire: 'Zealot' and 'Postcolonial' Readings," in *Postcolonial Theory and Theology* (ed. C. Keller, M. Nausner and M. Rivera; St. Louis: Chalice, 2004), 134–48. Richard Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), though not offering an explicitly postcolonial reading, is also central to this discussion.

with a trial conducted by a Roman colonial official who, in each text, condemns the hero to be crucified, a telling moment for a sub-genre noted for the relative absence of any imperial presence. In this scene, among others, Xenophon's male lead, Habrocomes, illustrates why some scholars consider him to be paradigmatic of the male subject constructed by the ancient romance. Habrocomes (along with other handsome youths of a similar ilk) "represents a new kind of hero, a romantic aristocrat" with "new virtues"; this type, according to classicist Gareth Schmeling, embodies the following heroic traits that run counter to the traditional Greek image of the hero: "kindness, faithfulness (hardly an early heroic virtue), gentleness, love of peace, abhorrence of violence . . . and an almost unwavering belief in the gods."²⁵ Schmeling's virtually "Pauline" description (cf. Gal 5:22–23) perhaps already anticipates some similarities between early Christian and "pagan" constructions of an alternative male subjectivity, similarities that warrant more explicit attention and are the focus of my reading that follows.

DIVINE DOMINATION

The two co-stars, Jesus and Habrocomes, at first glance may appear simply to be acute embodiments of the social and political gaps between the gospel and the romance. Habrocomes hails from Ephesus, the urban jewel of Roman Asia. The sixteen-year old son of Lycomedes and Themisto, who are "among the most influential [τὰ πρῶτα] citizens," Habrocomes is wealthy, exceptionally handsome and cultured. Worshipped as a god and destined for the honors of public office, Habrocomes is admired and sought out by "every one in Ephesus . . . and in the rest of Asia as well" (*Ephes.* 1.1.1). For an early Christian writer across the Mediterranean, however, someone of "first" [πρῶτοι] rank like Habrocomes is at risk of becoming "last" in God's imminent empire as Mark imagines it (cf. Mark 10:31). Indeed, by contrast, Mark offers an apparently nondescript Jesus, "the son of Mary,"

²⁵ Gareth L. Schmeling, *Chariton* (Twayne's World Authors Series 295; New York: Twayne, 1974), 133–34. Schmeling is describing another romance hero, Chaereas, though his observations fit Habrocomes nonetheless, especially since many scholars take Chariton to be Xenophon's immediate predecessor and model. On Habrocomes in particular, see Gareth L. Schmeling, *Xenophon of Ephesus* (Twayne's World Authors Series 613; Boston: Twayne, 1980), 21–75 (which I draw upon below).

who seems to be just a simple peasant “carpenter” in Nazareth, lacking *paideia* and living in the imperial backwater of Galilee (cf. 6:1–6). Yet for those with eyes to see, he is also the son of royalty (1:11; 12:1–12), renowned for his strength (1:7, 27), spiritually endowed with authority (1:21), recognized as a god (1:24; 3:11) and honored far and wide, at least outside of his hometown (1:28, 33, 45; 6:4).²⁶

Marked by very different social locations, Jesus and Habrocomes are also both set apart for divinely-fated suffering from the beginning of each narrative. Xenophon introduces his leading man by noting his antagonistic relationship with Eros, “a contentious god and implacable against those who despise him.” The self-absorbed Habrocomes at first refuses to “even recognize Eros as a god . . . saying that no one would ever fall in love or submit to the god expect of his own accord” (*Ephes.* 1.1.1). Eros in turn plans to exact a lengthy revenge and thus initiates the plot by making him fall in love with Anthia who, like Habrocomes, is of unearthly beauty (1.2.5–7). At their first encounter the two teens are “captivated” by one another’s looks and Habrocomes, now “a prisoner of the god,” will shortly lament that he is also “the slave of a girl,” highlighting a trope of subjection that is later literally played out in the couple’s numerous enslavements.

Eros’s designs, however, reach beyond the couple’s initial infatuation even though the god himself does not appear again in the narrative (cf. 1.2.9). An oracle from the temple of Apollo, consulted by the couple’s concerned families, predicts “terrible sufferings and toils that are endless” for the passionate pair, though, as the conventions of romance demand, “after their sufferings a better fate is in store” for them (1.6.2). During their foretold separation, Habrocomes and Anthia will repeatedly recall both the oracle and Eros’s desire for revenge, with the implication that Eros himself unfolds the entire plot of the romance. Working invisibly, he leaves traces of his agency both in prophecy and in the sheer power of attraction to move the story from one erotic encounter to the next.²⁷

²⁶ Translations of Mark’s Gospel in this essay are generally taken from the NRSV and I will note when I modify or replace them with my own. Likewise, translations of *An Ephesian Tale* are from Graham Anderson’s version in Bryan P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 125–69, and I note any changes or translations when they are my own.

²⁷ On the relationship between the oracle and the plot of the story, see Schmeling (*Xenophon of Ephesus*, 27) and J. Bradley Chance, the latter of whom rightly ques-

Not unlike Xenophon, Mark also begins his narrative with an encounter between his main character and an ambiguously violent deity, one whose spirit “drives him out into the wilderness” (αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον) at his baptism (Mark 1:12; my modification). Where Habrocomes will suffer because he refused the god of love, we learn at Jesus’ baptism that he will suffer because he is the beloved of God (1:9–11). As God speaks the language of sacred Scripture, declaring him to be the “beloved son” with whom he is “well pleased,” Mark alludes to the exaltation of Jesus as the kingly son of God in part by echoing royal imagery from LXX Ps 2:7: “He said to me, ‘You are my son; today I have begotten you’” (υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε; cf. Mark 1:11). Yet Mark also hints at Jesus’ impending humiliation as God’s chosen one as well by echoing the story of another “beloved” (ἀγαπητός) son, namely Isaac, who was bound and offered as a sacrifice by his father just as Jesus will be (Mark 1:11; cf. LXX Gen 22:2, 12, 16). For, as Jon Levenson notes, “like Isaac, the paschal lamb, and the suffering servant, Jesus will provide his father in heaven complete pleasure only when he has endured a brutal confrontation with nothing short of death itself.” “The chosen one,” Levenson continues, “is signaled out for both exaltation and humiliation, for glory and for death, but the confrontation with death must come first”; a point underscored in the parable of the wicked tenants, in which the “beloved son” is killed (Mark 12:6).²⁸

tions Schmeling’s overly precise reading (“Divine Prognostications and the Movement of Story: An Intertextual Exploration of Xenophon’s *Ephesian Tale* and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* [ed. R. F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance and J. Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998], 219–34, esp. 220–27). Chance also shows how Eros’s plans for revenge are implicitly unfolding in the events forecasted by the oracle: “What we are witnessing and our heroes experiencing is the revenge of Eros playing itself out in a fated plot foreseen by the oracle” (222–23; cf. *Ephes.* 1.4.5; 1.10.2; 2.1.2). Kathryn Chew concurs and adds that the absent presence of Eros is discernable “especially in the operation of ‘love at first sight,’ and in the way that the succession of suitors is used to further the adventures of the couple, as Eros drives the other romance’s storylines” (“Focalization in Xenophon of Ephesos’ *Ephesiaka*,” in Hock, Chance and Perkins, *Ancient Fiction*, 47–59 [53]).

²⁸ Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 201; cf. 59. On Mark’s use of Scripture in this scene, see Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 48–79, though I differ from Marcus, who argues that allusions to the story of Isaac’s binding are “very faint if present at all” (52).

Divine desire for Jesus' suffering and death is similarly implied by his "testing," which begins with the dove-like spirit suddenly casting him out into the wilderness to be "tested" (πειραζόμενος) by Satan with the complicity of the father (1:13).²⁹ Culminating in a slave's death on a cross, Jesus' testing in effect becomes a trial of his manhood, proof of his fidelity and endurance, just as the sexual temptations and assaults that threaten Habrocomes and Anthia during their separation try their mutual commitment to one another. Like Xenophon's Eros, Mark's God oversees these events from the text's periphery, explicitly appearing only twice (1:11; 9:7). Moreover, God's providence is acknowledged by Jesus who, not unlike Habrocomes and Anthia when they repeatedly allude back to Eros's vengeance and the Apollonian oracle, declares that "it is necessary" for the Son of man to "undergo great suffering" (8:31) and gestures to his scripted fate upon arrest by saying "let the Scriptures be fulfilled" (14:49; cf. 9:12–13).³⁰ While Jesus and Habrocomes attract the attention of quite different deities, Mark and Xenophon share a mutual interest in divinely-directed plots that provide even more intertextual intersections as the two heroes begin to pray.

PRAYER (MARK 14:32–42; *EPHES.* 1.4.1–3)

Pleas to the gods, often made in moments of personal crisis, represent stylized models of popular piety across the variety of ancient narratives. Both Mark and Xenophon use prayer in key scenes to dramatize inner, emotional turmoil as an intense struggle between divine domination and human submission, an encounter that in each text complicates the manliness of the male lead.³¹ For instance, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, in one recent commentator's words, clearly contrasts the "noble and heroic Jesus" with the "weak and cowardly

²⁹ On the "testing" of Jesus throughout Mark, see Susan R. Garrett, *The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), esp. 56, 59, 91, 102, 104–10, 113.

³⁰ On the formal similarities between Xenophon's oracle and Mark's passion predictions, see Ronald F. Hock, "Why New Testament Scholars Should Read Ancient Novels," Hock, Chance and Perkins, *Ancient Fiction*, 121–38 (127).

³¹ On this episode, see Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 215 n. 66. For a more general comparison of prayer scenes as "novelistic fictions" both in Mark and in the ancient romance, see Charles Hedrick, "Representing Prayer in Mark and Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*," *PRSt* 22 (1995): 239–57.

disciples,” who were not “strong enough to stay awake one hour” (Mark 14:37).³² Yet Jesus’ prayer, his only narrated divine appeal in Mark’s Gospel, arguably presents to the reader an unexpected moment of weakness that is implicitly coded as unmanly. After celebrating the Passover meal and singing the hymn with his disciples, Jesus goes to pray alone. With minimal description, Mark underscores the fact that Jesus is “amazed” (ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι) and “distressed” (ἀδημονεῖν), while also hinting at the invisible yet overpowering divine presence that intends him harm, not unlike Eros in the *Ephesian Tale*.³³ Confronted with his father and his fate, Jesus admits to Peter, James and John that he is “deeply grieved even to death.” An acknowledgment of being overcome by “grief” (περίλυπός), even in the stylized language of the psalms with which Jesus speaks here (cf. LXX Pss. 41:6, 12; 42:5), could be seen to violate the decorum of the classical male subject.³⁴ By continually “falling on the ground” and by

³² John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (SP 2; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2002), 413.

³³ Timothy Dwyer, *Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 128; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 179–80. Dwyer surveys possible interpretations of ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι and ἀδημονεῖν, the former being associated elsewhere in Mark with miraculous intervention or a revelation of the divine will (1:27; 16:5–6; 10:24, 32). Taken together these terms register Jesus’ emotional state in 14:33. Dwyer concludes that the language shows “Jesus confronted with the presence of God and the agony of the revelation of the divine will” (179).

³⁴ Here I am drawing in part on the observations of Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 62–63. For the text and translation of Cicero, I am following and slightly modifying the translation in the LCL edition. For the tradition of male self-fashioning Cicero represents, experiencing grief or pain itself is not dishonoring; behaving like Philoctetes, however, whose cries made the “the rocks of Lemnos” resound with “his wails and complaints, his sighs and groanings,” most certainly is (*Fin.* 2.29.94). Writing almost two centuries later about another Homeric hero, Odysseus, Epictetus expressed similar sentiments. Noting with disapproval that Odysseus once sat on a rock and wept for his wife (Homer, *Od.* 5.82), Epictetus curtly remarks that if “Odysseus wept and wailed, he was not a good man” (*Diatr.* 3.24.20). In his second-century treatise the *True Discourse*, Celsus clearly stands in this tradition when he argues that, if Jesus were indeed a god, he should have found the prospect of his torture and execution “neither painful nor grievous” (Origen, *Cels.* 2.23). Observing Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, Celsus is moved to ask, with some embellishment, “Why then does he utter loud laments and wailings, and pray that he may avoid the fear of death, saying something like this, ‘O Father, if this cup could pass by me?’” (2.24). For Origen’s outraged response, see especially 2.24, 7.55. Origen first blasts Celsus for forgetting that the Gospels never explicitly say that Jesus “uttered wailings” (2.24). Origen also rebukes him for omitting the second half of Jesus’ prayer—“Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will”—which for Origen shows Jesus’ “piety,” “willing obedience” and “greatness of soul” (2.24). Origen finds it impossible that Jesus might have prayed out of “any mean cowardice as some

praying over and over again (14:35), Jesus shows he has been physically weakened and hence “effeminized” by his expressive emotions.³⁵ Like his male disciples, Jesus too was subject to his “weak flesh” (cf. 14:38).³⁶

From this abject position, Jesus prays that the “cup” might be removed and that the “hour might pass,” not only revealing his desire to avoid the *πειρασμός* to come, but also rendering a subtle complaint, however reverential (especially in contrast to the arrogance of Habrocomes), against the divine father for whom “all things are possible [πάντα δυνατά]” and by whose power another fate could be chosen (14:35–36; cf. 10:27; 11:23).³⁷ As Jesus continues, saying, “yet not what I want, but what you want” (14:36), he nevertheless enacts his complete submission to the divine desire. In this act of

think,” since his “silence under the scourge” manifested a “courage and patience superior to that of any of the Greeks who spoke while enduring torture.” And it was his “meekness,” Origen continues, that enabled him to “endure all the outrages” of his tormentors (7.55). For the English translation I am following Henry Chadwick, ed. and trans., *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953). Other early critics of Christianity also made rhetorical fodder of Jesus’ apparent unmanliness here. See Jerome, possibly in response to Porphyry: “Let them blush with shame who think the Savior dreaded death and said out of fear of suffering, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me’” (*Commentary on Matthew* 4.26.8, translation from Manlio Simonetti, ed. and trans., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament 1b, Matthew 14–28* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002], 236; my thanks to Stephen Moore for drawing my attention to this reference).

³⁵ Jerome Neyrey, “The Absence of Jesus’ Emotions—The Lucan Redaction of Lk 22:39–46,” *Biblica* 61 (1980): 153–71 (154–59). Neyrey helpfully discusses λύπη in the context of Stoic moral philosophy, drawing on Cicero and Philo in particular, and suggests that “moral judgements would certainly be implied in descriptions of Jesus [in Mark] as περίλυπός and the disciples [in Luke] as sleeping because of λύπη” (157). Arguing that Luke deliberately removed Jesus’ λύπη from Mark 14:33, as well as its debilitating effects (such as repeatedly falling down and praying), Neyrey makes a strong case that Luke presents Jesus as a model of virtuous ἀνδρεία. Strangely, however, he omits these insights from his later reading of the Matthean version of Gethsemane in *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*, even though Matthew retains the Markan Jesus’ confession of grief that apparently troubled Luke.

³⁶ This is a point that even Origen had to admit: “Now in this instance he is speaking in his humanity both of the weakness of the human flesh and the willingness of the spirit. He refers to the weakness in the words, ‘father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,’ and to the willingness of the spirit in ‘Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt’” (*Cels.* 2.25).

³⁷ See Garrett on Jesus’ instructions in Mark 14:38: “Jesus is here admonishing his followers to do as he has done. In other words, Jesus’ just-concluded petitions that the hour may pass and that God remove the cup were likewise prayers to escape *peirasmos*” (*Temptations of Jesus*, 93). On the prayer as a complaint to God, not unlike the prayers made by the youths and maidens in ancient romances, see Hedrick, “Representing Prayer,” 256.

confessing and then renouncing his unmanly fear, his dread and hesitancy are all the more dramatically overcome and the dictates of honorable piety are more clearly upheld as a result. Yet this spectacular moment of recovered manliness, one that has provoked outbursts of apologetic approval from commentators since Origen, simultaneously entails a more ambiguous surrender to the exacting punishments of the occupying colonial power. For Jesus ultimately submits not just to his father, but to the Roman Gentiles—whom he foretold would “mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him [μαστιγώσουσιν αὐτόν] and kill him”—by means of a dishonorable death that compromises his moral and physical masculine integrity (10:34).³⁸ Despite being unmatched in later Christian literature for its unsettling representation of Jesus, the scene at Gethsemane in Mark’s Gospel perhaps remains both too comfortable in its canonical familiarity and too distinct in its Christian piety for a historical appreciation of Jesus’ “gender trouble.”

Xenophon’s polytheistic romance presents a similar scene of prayer, although offered under very different circumstances to be sure, which, when read comparatively, may disturb conventional boundaries drawn between forms of ancient popular piety as well as disrupt conventional readings of the Gospels that (implicitly or explicitly) extol Jesus’ unproblematic masculinity. Praying alone at night after the “local festival of Artemis” (a religious ritual), Habrocomes’ masculinity is explicitly compromised by his desire for Anthia, whom Eros arranged for him to see for the first time in the Artemision (*Ephes.* 1.4.1–3). Like Jesus, he expresses his despair before he prays, but with even greater melodrama and an open confession of his unmanliness. A “prisoner of the god” of love, he “pulls his hair,” “tears his clothes,” “laments” and cries out, saying: “What catastrophe has befallen me, Habrocomes, till now a man (μέχρι νῦν ἀνδρικός), despising Eros and slandering the god?” (1.4.1).

Xenophon here combines an aggressive Eros from earlier mythological traditions with classical tropes of moral struggle represented as a state of internal war, dramatizing the breakdown of the philosophical notions of self-mastery that mark the arrogant impiety of the σώφρονας, Habrocomes (cf. 1.4.4).³⁹ Figuring his desire as an

³⁸ See the opposite reading of Jesus’ masculinity in Romans by Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor*, 158–64.

³⁹ Ryan K. Balot situates erotic desire in Chariton’s romance within classical

assault by the god, Habrocomes describes his unmanly state as someone “captured” and “conquered,” being “forced to be the slave of a girl” (παρθένῳ δουλεύειν ἀναγκάζομαι), which he equates with being a “worthless coward” (ὃ πάντα ἄνανδρος ἐγὼ πονηρός). Increasing the tension of the scene, Habrocomes attempts to resist his passion by declaring defiantly (in good Stoic fashion) that he “must conquer this worthless god” because, he says, “Anthia is beautiful to your eyes, Habrocomes; but not to you, if your will holds firm” (1.4.2).⁴⁰ “Eros,” he vows one last time, “must never be my master” (1.4.2). Enraged by this outburst, Eros “drags him along” and “tortures him against his will,” leading the now exhausted Habrocomes to surrender. Like Jesus, he “throws himself to the ground” and begins to pray (1.4.4). Habrocomes is again more explicit and provocative than Jesus as he describes his submission as defeat: “You have won, Eros . . . You have set up a great trophy over the self-possessed [σώφρονος] Habrocomes; he is your suppliant” (1.4.4). With this sly gesture of self-fashioning, however, Habrocomes converts his status from prisoner to penitent worshiper with a performative redescription that enables him, like Jesus, to acknowledge the deity’s authority as “master of all things” (πάντων δεσπότην) while simultaneously gaining leverage to impose on the god’s autonomy by making a legitimate request: “But now give me Anthia” (1.4.5). With this act Habrocomes also shifts the scene from one of coerced submission to desired domination as he exercises his (still compromised) will to choose the woman he initially refused, a choice he will repeat when he privately swears fidelity to Anthia and so reclaims the “virginity” (σωφροσύνην) that (along with his stunning good looks) defined his manliness (implicitly at 1.11.4; explicitly at 2.1.3–5). Soon, however, Habrocomes, like Jesus, will find that the very oath that freely binds him to his beloved also anticipates a predicted separation and (lit-

philosophical discourses that posit the integrity of the masculine self as the basis of patriarchal authority within the *polis* (“Foucault, Chariton, and the Masculine Self,” *Helios* 25 [1998]: 139–62). Balot’s claims regarding the romance’s didactic intentions, however, are mitigated by his own insightful observations about the unresolved tension in the text between ἔρος and γάμος.

⁴⁰ On the Stoic principles here invoked, see Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 92–93. For a more general discussion of Habrocomes in this scene, see Schmeling, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, 21–26.

eral) enslavement by hostile foreigners that undermines his status as a free man (cf. 1.13–14).

As male subjects, both Jesus and Habrocomes are similarly unmanned by their passions, submitting to the fear or the fearsome force of desire that, however momentarily, divides their respective wills between resistance to and compliance with the demands of a deity. Paradoxically, these split subjects both attempt to regain their self-mastery through even greater subjection enacted through prayer. This represents a charged and complex, if also familiar, moment. While submission to one's social superiors was accounted laudable conduct for all subjects in the Roman world, such routine obedience, especially to the gods, also naturalized the dominant political order of the empire. Moreover, under this empire even the free service of the elite adult male (e.g., adulation for the emperor or a gift for a provincial official or patron) could signify shameful servility when performed with an excess of devotion or when done for plainly self-interested motives.

Against this colonial backdrop, which at times reinforced the sharp demarcation of colonizer and colonized, the complete surrender of Jesus and Habrocomes to the divine order can perhaps be understood to represent an allegory for the position of all male subjects under the imperial order. In demanding Anthia, Habrocomes submits to his own erotic passion and to Eros's compulsion. In choosing death, Jesus likewise submits to his own god's compulsion after overcoming his passionate fear. As the divinely-plotted suffering of both characters culminates in crucifixion by the Roman state, the intersection of the divine and political orders becomes even more pronounced, while the position of the male subject is complicated as a result: resistant submission to their respective deities will soon lead these "heroes" to submissive resistance to provincial governors. Both Jesus and Habrocomes, then, emerge from their prayers embodying a destabilized subjectivity that undermines clear conventions of "manly" activity and "feminine" passivity. Mark and Xenophon will also provide these leading men with multiple stages upon which to play out such an uneven masculinity, as demonstrated by their continued faithfulness and endurance during scenes of capture, public trials and torture.

CAPTURE (MARK 14:41–52; *EPHES.* 1.13–14)

In the *Ephesian Tale*, an Apollonian oracle foretells that Habrocomes and Anthia will be captured and bound in chains by men who roam the sea. Speaking with oracular authority himself several times in Mark's Gospel, Jesus similarly predicts that in Jerusalem he will be "handed over [παράδοθήσεται] to the chief priests and the scribes" (Mark 10:33; cf. 8:31; 9:31), events set in motion by his betrayal and capture. With their surrender to Phoenician pirates, Habrocomes and Anthia begin the first in a series of enslavements that for Habrocomes repeat and literalize his subjection to Eros who has metaphorically made him "a slave to a girl" (*Ephes.* 1.4.1).⁴¹ With his arrest by a Judean posse, Jesus likewise commences passing through a series of exchanges, linked by further acts of Jesus being "handed over" (παρέδωκαν; Mark 14:44; 15:1, 15), initiating the last in the series of divinely-arranged "testings" that began in the wilderness.⁴² As Habrocomes and Jesus, together with their companions, each face armed opponents who (in different ways) represent the perversion of the legitimate social and political order, they both engage in the "explicit co-option of passivity in resistance" that continues throughout each narrative: neither fleeing in cowardice nor fighting with

⁴¹ Anthia likewise undergoes repeated enslavements and multiple threats to her marriage and to her person, though Xenophon tends to downplay their connection to either the oracle or Eros's plans for revenge despite her being pivotal to the events of both. J. Gwyn Griffith rightly notes that she "seems to be strangely omitted from the moral balance-sheet of the oracle and what lies behind it" and that including her in Eros's plans for revenge is "morally indefensible" since it is Habrocomes' arrogance, not any action of hers, that offended the deity ("Xenophon of Ephesus on Isis and Alexandria," in *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren* [ed. M. B. de Boer and T. A. Eldridge; EPRO 68; Leiden: Brill, 1978], 409–37 [413]). For a closer analysis of Anthia, see Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine*, 51–56. Also see Lawrence Wills's discussion of how slavery and other trials pose a threat to the aristocratic self-perception of hero and heroine ("The Depiction of Slavery in the Ancient Novels," *Semeia* 83 [1998]: 113–32). Xenophon's likely source, Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, makes the (temporary) agony of this descent into bondage explicit, while also underscoring the "natural" difference between slaves and "slaves" (cf. *Chae.* 1.10, 14; 2.1, 3; 3.10; 4.3). Wills argues that Chariton upholds this contrast more than other romances while Xenophon views barbarians and impure lust as greater threats (118–21), though Wills perhaps neglects the fact that these threats in Xenophon are made possible by the slave-status of youth and maiden.

⁴² Cf. Garrett's comments in this respect: "Thus, all the trials that Jesus has faced up [un]til and including this time in Gethsemane are but the prelude to the final, most severe time of trial that he will undergo in his suffering and death at the hands of sinners" (*Temptations of Jesus*, 91).

bravery, they resort to tactics of more collusive resistance that leave their manliness ambiguous and uncertain.

Mark signals the beginning of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane with the arrival of Judas leading a "crowd with swords and clubs" (Mark 14:43), a party that has been deputized by the same Judean elite earlier indicted by Jesus as nothing better than a gang of "bandits" (λησταί; 11:17) for their leadership over what he (arguably) considers to be a corrupt religious and economic colonial order that is sustained both materially and symbolically by the rituals of temple they oversee. In direct response to Jesus' charge, which was made during his prophetic demonstration in the temple's outer precincts, the native elite began to plot the events that now unfold against the Galilean preacher (11:18; cf. 12:12; 14:1–2, 10–11).⁴³ Telling his sleeping disciples to "get up" so that together they may go forward (ἄγωμεν) to meet his betrayer (14:42),⁴⁴ Jesus clearly exhibits the courage and free will often remarked upon by Markan scholars, though the paradox of willed submission continues to complicate Jesus' gender as the scene progresses. After Judas offers Jesus an ironic kiss and greeting, to which Jesus makes no reply, the armed forces violently "lay hands on him and arrest him," drawing an immediate counter-attack from "one of those who stood near" with a sword (14:46–47).⁴⁵ Eschewing both the aggressive self-defense of his loyal swordsman

⁴³ In Mark, Jesus criticizes the abuses of the elite several times (7:9–13; 11:12–21; 12:38–44) and even predicts their involvement in his death (cf. 12:7–12). Jesus' demonstration in the temple, together with his cursing of the fig tree shortly thereafter (11:20–21), anticipates the destruction of the temple and its native authorities. As Moore observes, "Mark appears to interpret this destruction and slaughter as divine punishment of the Judean elites for their exploitation of the common people . . . coupled with their rejection of the Galilean Messiah" ("Mark and Empire," 142). As part of his temple demonstration, the Markan Jesus quotes both Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11, the latter of which rhetorically asks: "is my house, where my name has been called upon it there, a cave of robbers before you?" (LXX: σπήλαιον ληστῶν; cf. Mark 11:17). For a recent discussion of this scene, see Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20* (WBC 34B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 169–82.

⁴⁴ On the possible military connotations of ἄγωμεν here, meaning "to go out to meet an approaching enemy," see Evans, *Mark*, 418. Neyrey argues that, since Jesus accepts "hardships and death as the noble choice of a free man," he also "freely meets his fate" when the arresting party arrives (*Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*, 149).

⁴⁵ On the violent sense of ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ and the debate over the anonymous swordsman's identity, see Evans, *Mark*, 423–25; and Raymond Brown, *Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (2 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:263, 266–74.

and the cowardly desertion of the disciples (whose shame is punctuated by the desperate, naked escape of “a certain young man”; 14:51), Jesus effectively surrenders, while remaining courageous and defiant.⁴⁶ Nobly defending his honor and innocence against the hired thugs who mistake him for a “bandit” (ληστήν), the quiescent captive also protests their clandestine secrecy, characteristic of the corrupt establishment who hired them (14:48).⁴⁷

Jesus concludes with a declarative flourish that again ambiguously combines confident defiance with compliant resignation: “let the Scriptures be fulfilled” (14:49). As if to render his critique superfluous, Jesus is implying that these events were not (simply) a political conspiracy, but were in fact inexorable, written in the Scriptures by a divine purpose that simultaneously overwrites the plans of the “sinners” and the power of Jesus, who, before his prayer in Gethsemane, exercised a nearly indomitable mastery, evident especially in his exorcisms.⁴⁸ Though this “strong man” persona may hint at some supernatural muscle still up his sleeve (cf. 3:27), Jesus’ quick submission

⁴⁶ For this reading of the enigmatic “young man” here, see especially Howard M. Jackson, “Why the Youth Shed His Cloak and Fleed Naked: The Meaning and Purpose of Mark 15:51–52,” *JBL* 116 (1997): 273–89.

⁴⁷ On the questions of the legality of arrest, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:247. Of Jesus’ complaint in this scene, Brown says that he is “protesting that the arms employed in arresting him give the absurd impression that he has been a man of violence” (283), though one might question how absurd the impression in fact is. See, for example, the observations by George Aichele, “Jesus’ Violence,” in *Violence, Utopia, and the Kingdom of God: Fantasy and Ideology in the Bible* (ed. T. Pippin and G. Aichele; New York: Routledge, 1998), 72–91.

⁴⁸ On Jesus’ manly domination of others in Mark, see Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Re-Mark-able Masculinities: Jesus, the Son of Man, and the (Sad) Sum of Manhood?,” in Moore and Capel Anderson, *New Testament Masculinities*, 93–135. Liew adduces evidence of a less-than-masterly Jesus as well. Brown remarks on why Jesus does nothing in this scene after displaying his divine power in several ways earlier in the story: “If he shows no such power now, it is because the Scriptures that point to suffering and death must be fulfilled” (*Death of the Messiah*, 1:286). I would add that up to and including his dramatic “teaching” in the temple several of Jesus’ actions, especially his exorcisms, mark him not only as an aggressive “strong man,” but also as an outlaw of sorts, as he himself earlier implied in a parable (Mark 3:23–27), which makes his inaction at his arrest all the more surprising. At his Roman trial, to which I will turn shortly, Jesus will again be associated with and condemned as a “bandit” (15:7, 26–27), with Mark perhaps implicitly invoking stereotypes of the lawless, hyper-masculine pseudo-soldier whose popularity with the oppressed peasantry threatens the social order (see my earlier interpretation in Eric Thurman, “Looking for a Few Good Men: Mark and Masculinity,” in Moore and Capel Anderson, *New Testament Masculinities*, 137–62).

to his scripted fate instead shows him to be open and vulnerable as the first “strike” against the “shepherd” is delivered (cf. 14:27).⁴⁹

Habrocomes likewise displays a singularly unheroic failure to defend himself as well as his beloved, when he and Anthia are kidnapped during their honeymoon sea voyage to Egypt, despite having received some level of martial training, presumably as a member of the *ephebia* (*Ephes.* 1.2).⁵⁰ Xenophon sets the scene in Rhodes where Phoenician pirates “posing as merchantmen” learn of the wealth onboard Habrocomes’ ship and plot a raid, since “they regarded their quarry as weaklings not likely to put up a fight” (1.13.2).⁵¹ After following Habrocomes and Anthia into open sea, the pirates find the entire crew, like Jesus’ disciples, asleep and “off their guard” and so board the ship “armed to the teeth with their swords drawn” (1.13.5). In response, some of the ship’s entourage “threw themselves in terror into the sea.” Others either fought back or, like Habrocomes’ aged pedagogues, exhibited the loyalty unto death that Jesus’ disciples could not, ending their lives bemoaning only the unhappy thought of their masters becoming the “slaves of pirates” (δουλείαν ληστρικὴν; 1.14.3).⁵²

Out of both fear and loyalty (to one another if not their servants), however, Habrocomes and Anthia actually offer themselves as “slaves” (1.13.6), prostrating themselves together before Corymbus, the pirate chief, and begging to be spared death and separation, a fate worse

⁴⁹ The Matthean Jesus rolls up his sleeves a bit, telling his captors that he has “more than twelve legions of angels at my disposal” (Matt 26:53), while the Johannine Jesus merely has to strike a flexed pose and say “I am” to make his captors step back and fall to the ground (John 18:6); both of these clearly contrast with Jesus’ inaction in Mark.

⁵⁰ While ἑφηβοί (boys roughly between puberty and twenty years of age) underwent temporary paramilitary training in classical Athens, the post-Alexandrian period generally saw a decline in the demands of such instruction. The ἑφηβεία in this period, like other youth associations across the Mediterranean basin, undertook intellectual and aesthetic education for elite boys, inculcating local civic identity and tradition through a range of competitions and rituals. On the ἑφηβεία in Ephesus, see Guy Maclean Rogers, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesus: Foundation Myths of a Roman City* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 45, 58–59, 69, 112.

⁵¹ On the similarities between “pirates” and “bandits” in historical and literary narratives, see Akihiko Watanabe, *Hippothoos the Lover, Bandit, and Friend* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2003), 88–130.

⁵² On the elite class interests reflected in such representations of slaves, see Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 58–60. For this feature more generally across the range of the ancient novels, see Wills, “Depiction of Slavery.”

than death to them.⁵³ As they paradoxically hope to find the power to remain together in a position of abject powerlessness, Habrocomes finds his status as a free man compromised by his commitment to Anthia, a commitment which he upholds but does not defend with force. Like Jesus, Habrocomes and Anthia surrender to their captors without a struggle, though by comparison Xenophon's hero here appears much weaker than Mark's messiah. Only later, in a scene to which I will shortly turn, does Habrocomes match Jesus' verbal riposte; in this instance he is not even able to persuade the pirates to rescue his drowning tutor as they set fire to the ship before taking the enslaved couple to Tyre.⁵⁴ In these different scenes of capture, then, both the gospel and the romance similarly reveal "hapless heroes" who fluidly shift between gendered subject positions without any narrative judgment or even commentary.⁵⁵

TRIALS (MARK 14:53–65; 15:1–15; *EPHES.* 2.5.6–10.4; 4.2–4)

The malleable manliness on display in the scenes of capture continues during courtroom dramas that put the heroes' endurance to the test. Trials for capital crimes prosecuted by the Roman state in both the gospel and the romance represent the culmination of the series of ordeals for both Jesus and Habrocomes, as each are condemned to death by crucifixion. Roman trials in both texts also repeat judicial decisions reached in earlier trials conducted by the different parties who apprehended the respective hero. Faced with false testimony and savage physical abuse at nearly every turn, both Jesus and Habrocomes maintain a mute witness to their innocence, punctuated by moments of vocalized defiance during the moral contest at the center of each courtroom scene. With the decisive contest for both Jesus and Habrocomes set before a Roman provincial judge, who in each text wrongly condemns an innocent man in the

⁵³ Schmeling assails the couple's passivity and Xenophon's lack of literary skill, contrasting the slaves' lack of self-regard to their master's self-absorption (*Xenophon of Ephesus*, 34–36). Though insightful, he perhaps downplays the reason for the couple's actions, which includes both cowardice and commitment.

⁵⁴ Haynes contrasts Habrocomes' lack of persuasive power with Anthia's repeated ability to talk her way out of dangerous situations (*Fashioning the Feminine*, 87–88).

⁵⁵ For a description of the "hapless heroes" of the ancient romances, see Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*, 15–26.

interest of maintaining colonial order, the formula of the courtroom drama provides a venue for exploring how each text engages imperial ideology as the mechanisms of colonial administration come into clear focus for the first time.⁵⁶ Despite the posited contrast between oppositional Christian and collaborationist “pagan” narratives, both avoid either an apology for or direct critique of Roman justice, displaying instead a marked ambivalence evident in the implicit comparison of representatives of colonial authority with corrupt figures of local authority in both texts.

Before being handed over to the Roman prefect of Judea, for instance, Jesus is tried and condemned by the Sanhedrin members who had him arrested (Mark 14:53, 55, 64).⁵⁷ Under examination Jesus comports himself in a manner that recalls classical philosophical representations of the free male who speaks at will and whose refusal to speak, especially under juridical torture, constitutes an honorable silence that distinguishes him from the slave who (in ancient conventional representation) involuntarily confesses when coerced. Silence as a non-aggressive strategy of defense, however, is ambiguous and risky, able to signify either noble contempt or ignoble cowardice or guilt; in subsequent scenes Mark will frequently leave that ambiguity unresolved.⁵⁸ In this scene Jesus matches the aggressive

⁵⁶ Cf. the following comments by Saundra Schwartz: “The courtroom scene is a particularly apt formula for the dramatization of ideology. At the center of the drama is a contest, an *agôn*, between two opponents representing opposed moral positions, with the expectation that, at a predetermined endpoint (the verdict), one contestant will win. The trial scene, therefore, is a formula not only for the exposition of competing ideas but also for the valorization of the moral position implicitly supported by the text’s ideology” (“The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* [ed. T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele; SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003], 105–37 [110]).

⁵⁷ On a range of historical questions surrounding this scene, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:357–63, 423–26. For an alternative interpretation, see Evans, *Mark*, 439–53.

⁵⁸ On the relationship between torture, truth and slavery in classical Athens, see Paige Dubois, *Torture and Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Burrus (“Torture and Travail”) draws on Dubois while also marking significant shifts in the early Roman imperial period. On the ambiguity of silence for the free male, see the following comments by Neyrey: “It belongs to a free citizen to speak boldly in the appropriate public forums where men gather . . . In special circumstances, however, silence might also be the heroic action, if honor challenges and ripostes are not an issue. Silence may connote patient endurance and stoic perseverance” (*Honor and Shame in Matthew*, 150).

accusations of the council with his own speechless scorn for their contradictory and “false testimony” (14:55–59).⁵⁹

Challenged to respond by the unnamed high priest who now stands in the council’s midst, Jesus provides no reply, his silence signifying a resistance that even on a grammatical level blurs the distinction between active and passive stances (ὁ δὲ ἐσιώπα καὶ οὐκ ἀπεκρίνατο οὐδέν; 14:61).⁶⁰ Continuing the exchange, the high priest contemptuously puts a pointed question to Jesus, one that crystallizes the moral conflict at the center of the courtroom drama and at the center of the gospel itself: “Are *you* the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?!” (14:61).⁶¹

To this slight to his honor (which for Mark arguably slanders the honor of God as well), Jesus speaks with the presumed authority of a free man and effectively vows revenge. His confession (ἐγὼ εἶμι; 14:61) simultaneously incriminates him and indicts his judges as enemies of God who in turn will be judged by the divine Son of Man upon his glorious return.⁶² Dramatically tearing his clothes in outrage, the high priest charges Jesus with “blasphemy” and quickly secures a death sentence from the assembly who, along with the

⁵⁹ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:463. On the historical and narrative ambiguities of the “temple charge” in Mark, see 1:438–60.

⁶⁰ On this use of ἀπεκρίνατο in the middle voice as a technical legal term, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:463–64. My suggestion aims to bring out the sense of arrested action implied by the act of deliberately refusing to speak. Both Brown and Gundry inadvertently suggest the ambiguity of Jesus’ silence here, reading it as both active “contempt” and “strength,” as well as passive “resignation” to and “acceptance” of God’s will (Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:464; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 885–86). I would not deny the uncertainty, but when paired with the emphatic confession in 14:62, Jesus’ silence appears to me to read more like an act of resistance. Cf. William Campbell, “Engagement, Disengagement, and Obstruction: Jesus’ Defense Strategies in Mark’s Trial and Execution Scenes,” *JST* 26 (2004): 282–300 (286), though I would not go so far as he does to call such a tactic an acceptable and “established practice.”

⁶¹ Evans, *Mark*, 448. On the issues surrounding the circumlocution “Son of the Blessed,” see Evans, *Mark*, 448–50; and Joel Marcus, “Mark 14:61: Are You the Messiah-Son-of-God?,” *NovT* 31 (1989): 125–41.

⁶² Neyrey, commenting on the Matthean parallel (Matt 22:64), points out that Jesus speaks to defend his honor and the honor of God, his patron (*Honor and Shame in Matthew*, 150–51). I would add that Jesus’ allusions to Dan 7:13 and Ps 110:1, which ends with “until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet,” go further than self-defense, promising future vengeance for present injury. On the Son of Man saying in this scene, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:494–500; and Evans, *Mark*, 450–52.

guards, then proceed “to spit on him, to blindfold him and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophecy!’” (14:63–65).⁶³ After being outspoken in the face of hostility at his arrest and trial, Jesus’ silence here perhaps signals his defeated resignation more than a dignified self-restraint that would continue to contrast his courage with the cowardice of Peter who hides among the crowd in the courtyard during the proceedings (14:66–72). With Peter’s denials unfolding precisely as Jesus had predicted, the mocking commands to prophesy are layered with an ironic meaning that further complicates Jesus’ masculine autonomy: while Mark emphasizes Jesus’ power to foresee the actions of others, he also seems to constrain Jesus’ own ability to speak or act as the scene closes with the image of the guards beating a mute and motionless man.⁶⁴

Bound as a criminal and “handed over” to the prefect of Judea at daybreak, Jesus is accused of “many things” by the chief priests, apparently including sedition (15:1–3). Pilate, a complex character who has been interpreted as either weak-willed or politically wise in this situation, conducts his inquiry with some incredulity toward the accusations made by the chief priests, whom he suspects of “jealousy” (15:10), especially concerning Jesus’ alleged pretensions to Judean kingship. Now before an imperial judge who mediates the moral conflict between a peasant troublemaker and the native compradors, Jesus adopts a more evasive strategy of resistance that again underlines the ambiguity of using silence for self-defense in a social context in which more assertive, and hence more overtly “masculine,” rhetorical tactics might be expected. Like the high priest, Pilate

⁶³ On the meaning of the charge of “blasphemy,” see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:530–47; and Evans, *Mark*, 453–58.

⁶⁴ When similarly roughed up by a temple guardsman for talking back to Annas, the Johannine Jesus unsurprisingly maintains his honor by refusing to keep quiet (John 18:19). One can imagine the Markan Jesus likewise answering his tormentors by, say, either naming a guard or council member who struck him or reiterating his promise of future retribution, though any response by Jesus would also undermine the irony that runs throughout Mark’s passion narrative. Some scholars have explained Jesus’ speechless moments in the Gospel passion narratives as allusions to either the silence of the suffering righteous one of the Psalms or the Isaianic Suffering Servant, though only in this Markan passage (15:16–20) are those allusions clear. After being slapped and spat upon, the servant in LXX Isa 50:6–7 declares that “the Lord God helps me, therefore I was not ashamed,” a sentiment of passively awaiting divine vindication that, when alluded to by Mark, undermines the distinction drawn by Vines (*Problem of Markan Genre*, 20–21) between active Christian (and Jewish) and passive “pagan” novel heroes.

asks a direct question: “Are *you* the king of the Judeans?” (15:2). When asked point blank if he claims to be the rightful ruler of the provincial populace, Jesus answers with a sly equivocation—“you say so” (15:2)—that neither denies the charge nor accepts responsibility for its anti-colonial implications, a gesture that contrasts with the open confession he gave to the high priest earlier.⁶⁵ The chief priests take his lack of denial as an opening to issue further charges, though Jesus again silently dismisses their ploy. Likewise, he stubbornly refuses to answer Pilate directly, which, while it could be viewed as a tacit admission of guilt, at the very least signifies a lack of self-defense that stuns the Roman prefect who is “amazed” (θαυμάζειν) by Jesus’ apparent indifference to the life-or-death seriousness of the situation (15:5).⁶⁶

With no clear confession or proof of guilt, Pilate turns to the crowd in an apparent attempt to free Jesus as an innocent man by contrasting him with a seditious murderer, Barabbas. Mark perhaps intends this gesture to be seen as a calculated attempt by a shrewd colonial official to secure the political loyalty of the local populace. At the same time, however, Mark may also be underscoring what he sees as the moral weakness of a provincial governor who places colonial order ahead of criminal justice, since the governor is satisfied that by following the crowd’s wishes he has affirmed their allegiance to Rome and avoided any responsibility for a guilty verdict against Jesus (15:6–15).⁶⁷ Releasing Barabbas, Pilate hands Jesus over to be

⁶⁵ On the title “king of the Jews,” see Evans, *Mark*, 478. On the phrase “you say,” see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:489–93, 733; and Gundry, *Mark*, 925, 931–33 (which offer divergent readings).

⁶⁶ Jesus’ silence is as ambiguous as Pilate’s amazement; see the different nuances picked up or imported by commentators (Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:735; Gundry, *Mark*, 925; and Evans, *Mark*, 479), though most see in Jesus’ silence either a resigned aloofness or a “stoic” defiance and determination. On Roman law interpreting silence as guilt, see Evans, *Mark*, 479. Also see Josephus’s account of Jesus ben Ananias who, several years before the first Judean revolt, similarly refused to reply to a Roman governor but was instead released as a maniac (*B.J.* 6.300–9).

⁶⁷ On the trial and the historical Pilate, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 693–705. On Mark’s representation of Pilate, see Donahue and Harrington, *Gospel of Mark*, 436–40; and Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (SNTSMS 100; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 103–19. For a postcolonial take on the characterization of Pilate in Mark, see Simon Samuel, “Colonial Cross: A Postcolonial Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus” (Ph.D. diss., University of Sheffield, 2002), 239–42. Ched Myers diagrams the parallels between the Judean and Roman trials to demonstrate that Mark does not offer an “apology” for the Roman colonial administration (*Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988], 369–82).

flogged and crucified by Roman soldiers, though Mark passes over the gruesome details of the scourging and instead describes a scene of torture that parallels the earlier scene of mockery and abuse (15:16–20; cf. 14:65). Both Judean and Roman provincial powers are thus implicitly marked as culpable agents of Jesus' suffering and death.

Before the entire cohort Jesus is first stripped nude then dressed in purple and crowned as a king by the local agents of Roman authority, whose merciless mimicry of Jesus' alleged claim to Judean kingship is perhaps meant to mock the pretension of native resistance and autonomy (15:16–20).⁶⁸ Objectified and humiliated, Jesus remains unresponsive and his lack of action and speech opens him to charges of cowardice for failing to defend himself.⁶⁹ The palpable difference between powerless victim and ruthless victimizer, however, is also blurred by the signs of Jesus' suffering and shame: here and throughout Mark's passion narrative those signs paradoxically confirm his exalted identity as the Son of God and rhetorically transform his tormentors into the unwitting casualties of Markan irony. Not simply vanquished, but not yet triumphant, Jesus is led to the cross embodying a masculine identity that is destabilized by a paradox many interpreters find to be central to Mark's narrative: the resurrection and ultimately the return of Jesus represent the future victory of the Son of God that, ironically, may be achieved only through his present vulnerability and death.⁷⁰

Like Jesus, Habrocomes will be interrogated and punished first by those who are responsible for his capture, though in this courtroom drama of false testimony and public torture the expected moral struggle is between the sexual jealousy of a barbarian woman, Manto, and the threatened virginity of Habrocomes who has become her slave (*Ephes.* 2.3–9). Shortly after the Phoenician pirates bring

⁶⁸ For the details of flogging in antiquity, see the description and sources in Stephen D. Moore, *God's Gym: Divine Male Bodies of the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 4–6. For the parallels between the Jewish and Roman mockery scenes, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1:568–77.

⁶⁹ This was already a matter of debate in antiquity, as demonstrated by the exchange between Celsus and Origen (Origen, *Cels.* 7.53–57).

⁷⁰ Neyrey ("Honor and Shame in John's Passion Narrative") also notes the role of irony in representing Jesus' passion, though my aim is to show how Gospel writers participate in a wider historical discourse of masculinity and suffering, an attention to larger socio-cultural contexts that Neyrey himself suggests might nuance his own interpretation based on recent anthropological models of honor and shame.

Habrocomes and Anthia to Apsyrtus, Manto, the daughter of this “robber chief” who passes as a prominent merchant in Tyre, becomes infatuated with Habrocomes.⁷¹ To seduce Habrocomes, Manto elicits the assistance of her slaves who fear the “anger of a barbarian woman” and plead with him as a “friend and fellow slave” to give in to Manto’s desire lest they all “fall victim to [their] master’s anger” (2.4.1–2).

Despite his servile status, Habrocomes thus claims the nobility and autonomy of a free man. Asserting both his fidelity to Anthia and his freedom from coercion, Habrocomes defies the present threat of torture in the same way he earlier attempted to defy Eros and his figurative torments: “I am a slave, but I know how to keep my vows. They have power over my body, but my soul is still free. Now let Manto threaten me if she pleases—with swords, the noose, fire, and everything that the body of a slave can be made to bear, for she could never persuade me to do wrong against Anthia of my own free will” (2.4.4; cf. 1.4.1–4). Though Anthia selflessly tells him not to subject himself “to a barbarian’s anger,” but “to submit to [their] mistress’s desire” while she considers taking her own life (2.4.5–6), Habrocomes reaffirms his refusal in a written reply to a letter from Manto (2.5.4–5). Full of “envy, jealousy, grief and fear” at his rejection, Manto tears her hair, rips her clothes and then goes to her father to accuse “the ‘chaste’ [σώφρων] Habrocomes” of trying “to rob [her] virginity,” insulting both her person and her father’s honor (2.5–7).⁷² Manto’s false allegations, not unlike the false testimony of the Sanhedrin’s members in the first trial in Mark’s Gospel, initiates the first trial of Habrocomes in the romance.

Brought before Apsyrtus, “who did not investigate the matter further,” Habrocomes is simply denounced as a “depraved villain” for his alleged assault (2.6.1). Unlike the high priest in the Mark’s Gospel

⁷¹ For the discussion that follows, I draw primarily on Sandra Schwartz, “Courtroom Scenes in the Ancient Greek Novels” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1998), esp. 115–39. Schwartz notes that Apsyrtus is implicitly described in terms that resemble the families of the romance heroes and heroines (118 n. 7). On the stereotype of pirates who pass as legitimate merchants, see Watanabe, *Hippothonos*, 88–130.

⁷² Xenophon here repeats motifs found in both earlier Greek (Anthia and Bellerophon; Homer, *Il.* 6.163–65) and Jewish literature (Potiphar’s wife and Joseph; Gen 38 and *Testament of Joseph*). On the marked contrast between Greek and barbarian, see Schmeling, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, 42–43. On the characterization of Manto, see Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine*, 102, 108–9, 112–13.

who actively interrogated Jesus, Apsyrtus “would not allow himself to hear a single word” of counter-testimony, denying Habrocomes the opportunity to defend himself and to demonstrate his noble station. Habrocomes’ feeble failure to offer any rebuttal is still surprising, however, especially since he took the initiative in earlier scenes to speak out (however unsuccessfully) against his subjugation and even now has the counter-evidence of Manto’s letter, a fact that Apsyrtus himself will later discover (2.10.1).⁷³ With the revelation of his innocence and identity delayed (until the end of the scene in this case, as opposed to the *eschaton* in Mark’s Gospel), Habrocomes like Jesus will be scourged and tortured as Apsyrtus orders “his slaves to tear off Habrocomes’ clothes, bring fire and whips [μάστιγας], and flog the boy” (2.6.2). Unaccustomed to such “servile tortures,” Habrocomes nevertheless remains speechless as the “tortures disfigured his body” and “his blood drained out and his handsome appearance wasted away” (2.6.3–4).

Once again silent suffering is an ambiguous signifier. Perhaps this continued lack of speech represents the same defeated resignation shown by Jesus who similarly failed to verbally resist his tormentors despite offering earlier rebukes. More likely, I suggest, Habrocomes here maintains the manly moderation (σωφροσύνη) and self-control that was earlier “conquered” by Eros who similarly “tortured him against his will,” his self-restraint in this instance nobly protesting against the unjust punishment. Not weeping under the horrified gaze of Anthia who futilely pleads with Apsyrtus to end the spectacle, Habrocomes weeps only later in his “dark cell” when she is gone, sent to Syria as Manto’s slave (2.6.5–8.1).⁷⁴ As Xenophon implicitly

⁷³ See Schwartz’s discussion of authority figures (in the *Ephesian Tale* and *Chaereas and Callirhoe*) who frequently rush to an unjust judgment and then subsequently restore the hero after realizing their mistake (“Courtroom Scenes,” 115–39, esp. 119 and 125–26). On Habrocomes’ failure to mention Manto’s letter, see Schmeling, *Xenophon of Ephesus*, 48.

⁷⁴ This scene overlaps in several ways with the earlier narrative involving Eros’s torture of Habrocomes, notably the repetition of the words σωφροσύνη and βιάσιν, as well as the phrase “against my will” and the pointed distinction between one’s soul and body. Perkins argues that in both scenes Habrocomes models Stoic ethical principles (*Suffering Self*, 92–93), a point with which I agree, though I also note how these scenes combine to problematize the classically impenetrable male subject she sees being reinforced here. Chariton’s romance has a significant parallel to, and is a possible source for, this scene (4.2–3). Note especially the ambiguity of Chaereas’s silence and the use of σωφροσύνη to describe resistance to physical hardship.

overlays the two scenes of Habrocomes' torture, it seems that only as a helpless slave can Habrocomes successfully, though paradoxically, achieve the honor and self-mastery of the noble free male, upsetting conventional assumptions about slavery and virtue, while leaving unquestioned the appropriated image of the slave as the free man's necessary "other." Like Mark's Gospel, though achieved by different rhetorical means, Xenophon's romance undermines the moral and physical integrity of the classical male subject by the calculated combination of "masculine" virtue and "feminine" vulnerability.

Unlike the gospel, however, the romance also absolves the hero's persecutor of guilt by having him discover the truth and apologize for the unjust judgment and condemnation. Providentially, Apsyrtus will stumble upon "Manto's note to Habrocomes" and realize that "his punishment was unjust" (2.10.1). Apsyrtus then apologizes to the wronged youth, who has fallen down at Apsyrtus's knees after his experience of "terrible and pitiful sufferings" (2.10.2). Lifting him up, Apsyrtus immediately manumits Habrocomes and makes him manager of his estate, adding that Habrocomes "must not bear a grudge because of what happened," since he "did not mean to do [Habrocomes] wrong" (2.10.2). With no hint of anger or desire for retribution from Habrocomes, who simply thanks Apsyrtus "for finding out the truth" and for "rewarding" his "continence" (σωφροσύνης; 2.10.3), the worldly idealism that distinguishes the elitist fantasy of Xenophon's romance from the radical apocalyptic idealism of Mark's Gospel becomes clear. Unlike the Judean aristocrats whom Jesus warned would ultimately face divine vengeance for the wrongful murder of God's heir, a retribution that will completely destroy them and the entire temple establishment upon which they depend for their authority (Mark 12–13), Apsyrtus, who like them occupies a space between legitimate and illegitimate authority, will face no punishment, divine or otherwise, for his temporary miscarriage of justice. Indeed, he is apparently free to continue his criminal activity under the guise of legal business practices.⁷⁵ Habrocomes, however,

⁷⁵ Cf. the following observation by Schwartz: "At the end of the episode, the master is forgiven and the injustice forgotten. This is remarkable because Apsyrtus, a pirate chief, and Mithrides, a Persian satrap in love with the heroine [in a similar scene in Chariton's romance], are otherwise villainous characters . . . Everyone in the household rejoices for [Habrocomes] and thanks the master on his behalf. That the entire household is happy for Habrocomes shows that he is once again

remains “very distressed over Anthia” and in short order will leave the secure patronage of Apsyrtus to search for her (*Ephes.* 2.10.3–4; 12.2), only soon to find himself in yet another scene of crime and punishment.

Like Jesus, Habrocomes too will be falsely accused of a capital crime before a Roman prefect, constituting the most threatening moment of his preordained suffering.⁷⁶ Just as his earlier trial drama pivoted around his sexual fidelity, so also will this one. Shipwrecked while searching for Anthia, Habrocomes is captured by bandits and subsequently sold as a slave to a retired (probably Roman) soldier (πρεσβύτες στρατιώτης ἡ δὲ πεπαυμένος) in Pelusium in Egypt, beginning the last in a series of enslavements that repeat and literalize his subjection to Eros (3.12.2). While his master Araxus treats him “like a son,” his master’s wife, Kyno, longs to “make him her husband” and even promises to kill her present spouse to do so (3.12.4–5). “Hideous to look at” and “amazingly insatiable,” Kyno may covertly stand in for the coercive violence of imperial dominion, which is here displaced from the figure of the soldier, her husband, onto the colonized woman. Not unlike “Babylon the great, mother of whores” who is “drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus” in the book of Revelation (Rev 17:1–6), Kyno is an extreme example of misogynistic stereotypes of the rapaciously seductive “barbarian” female who threatens to unman the male subject via his own desire. Like Manto, Kyno also represents a negative counter-image to Anthia, while simultaneously repeating Manto’s sexual jealousy with even greater cruelty.⁷⁷

among the elite, upon whose happiness the group depends. It is perhaps disappointing to the modern reader, but illustrative of the novels’ elitist perspective and sympathy for the ruling class” (“Courtroom Scenes,” 125–26). Barely hidden behind the manufactured happiness enjoyed by Habrocomes and the reader, however, remains the anxious realization that honesty and justice are precarious notions outside the Greek *polis*.

⁷⁶ Schwartz helpfully compares the earlier scene of “domestic justice” with this proper trial before a Roman prefect (“Courtroom Scenes,” 126–39). Noting the differences in legal terms between domestic and juridical trials, she also points out that the Roman trial in the *Ephesian Tale* nevertheless mirrors the paradigmatic features of domestic punishment scenes in all other respects: “Habrocomes is a slave who is falsely accused of a crime; he appears before an authority figure and is not allowed to respond to the charges; he undergoes some sort of physically excruciating punishment, which forms the dramatic centerpiece of this trial; he is imprisoned; and he finally is restored to his proper status” (126).

⁷⁷ Haynes provides some insightful discussions of both Anthia and her female

Though earlier he valiantly withstood torture rather than betray Anthia, Habrocomes now thinks “hard about a number of things at once: Anthia, his oath and the chastity [σωφροσύνην] that had done him so much harm in the past” (*Ephes.* 3.12.5). Worn down by Kyno’s insistence, Habrocomes weakly surrenders his self-control in this scene and at first agrees to Kyno’s wishes, though, when she comes to fulfill her desire fresh from killing her husband, he ultimately refuses the “vile murderess” and leaves the house. Looking for an alibi and for revenge, Kyno (like Manto) puts on a dramatic show to convince the local patriarchs of Pelusium that Habrocomes, a slave, is guilty of the crime. Persuaded by her story, the assembly arrests Habrocomes and sends him in chains to the unnamed “prefect of Egypt” (τῆς Αἰγύπτου τότε ἄρχοντι)⁷⁸ to be punished “for the alleged murder of his master, Araxus” (3.12.6). Like Apsyrtus, but unlike Pilate, this prefect hears the charges but makes “no further effort to find out the facts”; thus this colonial courtroom scene will continue to repeat elements of the earlier domestic trial. As was the case previously before Apsyrtus, Habrocomes says nothing, apparently lacking the power to defend himself while the prefect gives “orders to have Habrocomes taken away and crucified” (4.2.1). Desire for social order again trumps legal due process as Habrocomes, like Jesus, goes to the cross an innocent and seemingly defeated man.

CRUCIFIXION AND BEYOND (MARK 15:1–41; *EPHES.* 3.12; 4.2–4)

Crucifixion represents the most extreme moment of predicted suffering for both Jesus and Habrocomes, as they are rendered utterly powerless and passive, each condemned to death by the Roman state.⁷⁹

antagonists; on Kyno in particular, see *Fashioning the Feminine*, 108–9. I am grateful to Virginia Burrus for drawing my attention to the similarities between Kyno and Babylon.

⁷⁸ On Xenophon’s terminology for the prefect, which differs from inscriptions and papyri evidence that describe the *praefectus Aegypti* with either ἑπαρχος or ἡγεμών, see Joseph L. Rife, “Officials of the Roman Provinces in Xenophon’s *Ephesiaca*,” *ζPE* 138 (2002): 93–108. Rife concludes that, “although the meaning of *archon* in Xenophon’s novel is not technical, it is consonant with the usage in imperial literature to designate provincial governors generally and in particular the Egyptian prefect” (105–6).

⁷⁹ For a discussion of crucifixions in the ancient romances, see Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 32, 80–82; and Karl Kerényi, *Die griechisch-orientalische*

Unlike Habrocomes, Jesus attracts a crowd to his cross, including Mary Magdalene, another Mary and Salome, who implicitly compound the shame of the male disciples by going to the cross when the men dared not. Like Anthia who earlier watched Habrocomes being tortured, they “were looking on” and faithfully bearing witness to the unfolding events of Jesus’ suffering (Mark 15:40–41). Perhaps too injured by the flogging to walk, Jesus is apparently physically carried to Golgotha by Roman soldiers, while a conscripted by-stander, Simon of Cyrene, bears his cross. Despite his weakness, Jesus nevertheless steadfastly refuses the pain-dulling “wine mixed with myrrh” offered by the soldiers; his willingness to endure suffering consciously unmasks the soldiers’ momentary compassion as a facade (15:21–23).⁸⁰

Again using minimal description, Mark notes that the soldiers then crucified the naked Jesus between “two bandits” at “nine o’clock in the morning,” with the *titulus* ironically publicizing Jesus’ claim to be “The King of the Judeans” (15:25–27). Various onlookers and even the chief priests and scribes “insult” and “mock” the condemned royal pretender, underlining Jesus’ isolation and helplessness while

Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung (2d ed.; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), 109–50. Chariton’s romance (at 4.3.6) is Xenophon’s most likely source here. Anthia’s most extreme moment of subjection comes when she is sold as a slave to a brothel-keeper and is forced to become a prostitute, a fate she avoids, however, when the trickster-like theatrics of a faked seizure dissuades any would be customers (5.5–9). Earlier she too escapes crucifixion by the miraculous timing of the local *eirenarch*, Perilaus (2.13; cf. 4.6).

⁸⁰ Campbell makes the interesting argument that the soldiers carry Jesus because he actively intends to obstruct the routine parading of the condemned before the populace (“Engagement, Disengagement, and Obstruction,” 291–98). Though I agree that φέρω here more likely suggests “carry” than “bring” or “lead,” I am not persuaded that Mark intends to show a refusal of co-operation on Jesus’ part, mostly because I think Mark would have been more explicit on this point given earlier instances of a defiant Jesus. Campbell likewise argues that Simon carries the cross-beam because Jesus actively refuses to do so, not because Jesus lacks the strength after his torture. Campbell adduces ancient evidence of criminals who were hideously beaten even as they carried the *patibulum*, suggesting that Jesus was in fact capable of doing likewise (292–94). Although Mark is unclear on Jesus’ physical condition after the flogging and on why his death occurs so quickly, the hypothesis that in this Markan representation severe injuries are understood to prevent him from carrying the cross remains (for now) more persuasive than Campbell’s alternative interpretation of Jesus’ deliberate disobedience, which, again, I believe Mark would have made more clear. I do however agree with Campbell that by refusing the offer of wine (whatever the wine’s purpose) Jesus “rejects the patronizing civility of mercy without justice” (298).

also fulfilling his own earlier predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Markan irony again contrasts the literal and actual significance of such verbal abuse in order to undermine the authority of Jesus' enemies and to vindicate his true identity as the Son of God, the Messiah (15:28–32).⁸¹

During this protracted "hour" of extreme subjection to forces both colonial and cosmic (cf. 14:41), Jesus, like Habrocomes, appears unsteady in his manly endurance; indeed, on the cross his self-mastery is completely shattered. Like Habrocomes, Jesus prays while suspended on the cross, an act of piety that could suggest his undaunted commitment and courage, but just as likely represents the collapse of Jesus' manly self-control as his intense despair, conveyed by both the act of screaming and his final plea to God, overwhelms him (15:34).⁸² Unlike the prayer in Gethsemane, where Jesus momentarily succumbs to his passions only to demonstrate his recovered self-mastery by paradoxically choosing to submit to God, this prayer begins and ends as a stark question: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34). Some by-standers misunderstand Jesus to be calling for Elijah to "take him down" (15:36). Though clearly not such an unheroic request as to be rescued, Jesus' vocalized despair nevertheless publicly announces his unmanly shame and helplessness even as he piously speaks the language of the psalms by way of protesting the lack of divine response.⁸³

⁸¹ On the irony in this scene, see Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 99, 285–86; and Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:982–1000.

⁸² On the impact of ἐβόησεν in 15:34, translated as "cry out" in the NRSV but perhaps better read as "screamed," see Gundry, *Mark*, 947–48, 965, who thinks the verb dignifies Jesus' shout; though Brown (*Death of the Messiah*, 2:1044) points to the verb's wide range of meanings, including "cries for help" (cf. Luke 9:38; 18:38). Neyrey provides a detailed discussion of this prayer as it appears in Matt 27:46, concluding that the use of Ps 22 implies an honorable form of speech that emphasizes not Jesus' personal emotions but Jesus' protest against God for seemingly having failed to honor Jesus, his son and client (*Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*, 152–61). While Neyrey acknowledges the shame inherent in excessive emotional displays by men in antiquity, I would argue that he is not sensitive enough to this point. Bowersock provides a more nuanced and more compelling reading of Jesus' vocalized suffering (*Fiction as History*, 55–76, esp. 74). Against attempts to read the citations from Ps 22 as an allusion to the entire Psalm and so an indication of Jesus' ultimate hope in deliverance, see Tom Thatcher, "(Re)Mark(s) on the Cross," *BibInt* 4 (1996): 346–61.

⁸³ On the expectation of Elijah's return at the *eschaton*, see Sir 48:10; Mal 4:5–6 (for further discussion, see Evans, *Mark*, 508). Neyrey remarks that "in the ancient world Jesus' request for deliverance would be unheroic and lacking in courage. It

Likewise, the “loud cry” at his death completes the sense of exhaustion and defeat registered by the prayer, moving the Roman centurion to add his own ironic insult—“Truly this man was a son of God”—to those of the local elites who were equally unimpressed with one who made bold claims about his divine power (15:37–39).⁸⁴ As the scene closes, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin that earlier unanimously condemned Jesus, hastily has the body of Jesus, given to him by Pilate, wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in a sealed tomb before the beginning of the Sabbath (15:42–46). As the narrative ends at the tomb with the knowledge that the body of Jesus is risen yet absent (16:1–8), Mark’s Gospel opens onto the present time of the reader who now anticipates both the future “empire of God [τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ] coming in power” with the return of Jesus (9:1, my trans.) and the present empire of Rome, among other hostile authorities, coming with its power to persecute the followers of Jesus, whom he predicted would be “handed over” to political powers just as he was (13:9–13).⁸⁵

At his crucifixion, Habrocomes, like Jesus, appears passively resigned to his death; he is “dumbfounded at his miseries” but unemotional and “consoled” only by the thought that Anthia, he believes, no longer lives (*Ephes.* 4.2.2). Lead away to the banks of the Nile by the prefect’s soldiers, Habrocomes is bound with ropes to a cross because “that is the way the Egyptians crucify” perpetrators (τοῦτο γὰρ τῆς ἀνασταυρώσεως ἔθος τοῖς ἐχρεῖ). On the cross Habrocomes

might also be judged as Jesus’ failure in the loyalty which he pledged to God in the Garden prayer . . .” (*Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*, 153).

⁸⁴ Frequently read as a clear confession of Christian faith, but more likely (on a literal level at least) representing simply jaded sarcasm, the centurion’s ambiguous comments epitomize the interpretive difficulties of reading a singular political stance with respect to Roman colonial authority in Mark’s Gospel. For discussions of what elicits the centurion’s comments, either the apocalyptic signs accompanying his death—including the darkness, the rent veil in the temple sanctuary, Jesus’ quick demise and even his death cry—or Jesus’ comportment at death, see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1143–52; and Whitney T. Shiner, “The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion and the Shrouding of Meaning in Mark,” *JSTOT* 78 (2000): 3–22. Pilch argues that the centurion “expresses admiration for an innocent person who dies . . . honorably. Jesus’ resignation to his fate, his manly manner of death, and his refusal to malign his persecutors would qualify him as ‘godlike’ or ‘son of god’” (“Death with Honor,” 70). My interpretation runs directly counter to Pilch’s and I would appeal to Bowersock (*Fiction as History*, 74–76) and Celsus (Origen, *Cels.* 7.53–57) for support.

⁸⁵ On the Gospel’s rhetorical interpellation of the reader at the empty tomb, see Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 298.

prays calmly, in noticeable contrast to Jesus' violent outburst. Yet, like the complaint issued by Jesus, his words not only confess (again) his unheroic helplessness, but also protest his innocence as one "betrayed" and "unjustly killed" (4.2.4–5). Denied an actual legal hearing, Habrocomes invokes the unnamed god of Egypt as his judge. To do so he frames his petition in the contractual terms of an ordeal, a trial by pain before the gods that interprets his suffering as a test of his guilt or innocence: "if I, Habrocomes, have done anything wrong, may I perish miserably . . . but if I have been betrayed by a wicked woman, I pray that the waters of the Nile should never be polluted by the body of a man unjustly killed" (4.2.4–5). As Sandra Schwartz notes, trials by ordeal and similar legal procedures in ancient Athens were "applied to persons who did not have civic rights and who therefore were incapable of testifying and making oaths," particularly slaves, women and non-Greeks. "As a slave," notes Schwartz, "Habrocomes only has recourse to ordeal. He is denied the right to speak in his defense and so must rely on the proof furnished by the god of Egypt."⁸⁶ As in the earlier scene of trial and torture, Habrocomes will prove his honor as a free man not with an eloquent speech or with appeals to his aristocratic pedigree, but by undergoing the penalties typically reserved for the underclass.

Xenophon tells us that "the god"—that is the god of Egypt who here displaces the god of Love as the leading providential power—"took pity on his prayer" (4.2.5). In Mark's Gospel, the God of Israel demonstrated his pity and anger at Jesus' crucifixion not by intervening directly, but by blocking the sun and rending the veil of the temple's sanctuary as a sign of judgment (Mark 15:33, 38).⁸⁷ In Xenophon's romance, however, the god of Egypt actively intercedes, sending a miraculous wind to knock Habrocomes and his cross into the Nile and so beginning his trial by water. Swept away by the current, Habrocomes remains completely unharmed by the water or his bindings; in an allusion to the myth of Osiris, even the river animals leave him untouched (*Ephes.* 4.2.6).⁸⁸ At the delta, guards capture

⁸⁶ Schwartz, "Courtroom Scenes," 133.

⁸⁷ On the two portents that appear during Jesus' crucifixion, see Evans, *Mark*, 506, 508–10; and Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1034–36, 1099–101, where Brown suggests that an element of sorrow accompanies the rending of the veil.

⁸⁸ Griffith revises Reinhold Merkelbach's earlier suggestion that the scene describes an initiation rite of the Isis mystery cult, arguing instead for a definite allusion to

Habrocomes as an escaped prisoner and return him to an enraged prefect who orders him to be burnt alive on a pyre. Recycling the literary motif of a fiery death that is miraculously foiled, one used to dramatic effect in some early Christian martyrologies as well, Xenophon repeats the trick of divine deliverance: the waters of the Nile rise and extinguish the flaming pyre, answering another prayer by Habrocomes to be “saved” (σωσαι; 4.2.9).

Not unlike Jesus, Habrocomes has been vindicated by the divine order on account of his shameful suffering: where his rescue was an “amazing thing” (θαῦμα) to the crowd who witnessed it (*Ephes.* 4.2.9), so too Jesus’ resurrection, interpreted as vindication in the parable of the Vineyard (Mark 12:1–11), will be “amazing in our eyes” (θαυμαστή ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν; 12:11). In each text the moment of vindication also anticipates a scene of reunion: when providentially reunited, Habrocomes and Anthia together will thank Isis for their restoration and “safety” (σωτηρίς; *Ephes.* 5.13.4). Moreover, Anthia, despite virtually outmanaging Habrocomes by “inventing ways of keeping chaste beyond a woman’s capacities” (5.8.6), will relate to him as her “husband and master” (5.14.1); similarly, when, as predicted, the Son of Man returns to gather his followers, the elect will see him “coming in clouds with great power and glory,” which is “the glory of his father with the holy angels” (Mark 13:26; 8:38). Here again both the gospel and the ancient romance, though with significant differences, similarly expand the definitional boundaries of the classical male subject. Subject to servile punishments and offering desperate prayers, both Jesus and Habrocomes are reduced to a state of unmanly humiliation. Yet in each text that state is carefully converted into a triumphant spectacle of reclaimed manly honor as each hero will be legally exonerated or divinely exalted to the amazement of witnesses.

As Habrocomes is brought again to the prefect of Egypt, the amazement continues; but this reaction underlines the stark difference between the actual death of Jesus and the (merely) symbolic death of Habrocomes: where Pilate “wonders” (ἐθαύμασεν) at Jesus’ unusually quick demise (Mark 15:44), the Egyptian governor is “amazed” (ἐθαύμασεν) by the testimony of Habrocomes’ life-saving miracle

the myth while questioning any direct connection to a specific ritual (“Xenophon of Ephesus,” 424–25). On the myth itself, see Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 356C–58B.

(*Ephes.* 4.2.10). At this point, each representative of Roman colonial authority acts humanely, even graciously, in some contrast to their earlier compromised or rushed judgments.⁸⁹ Respecting local ritual observances, Pilate obligingly gives the corpse of Jesus, a crucified criminal as far as he was concerned, to Joseph of Arimathea for burial (Mark 15:42–46). Similarly, but with an even grander gesture of goodwill, the prefect of Egypt releases Habrocomes after hearing his story just as Apsyrtus the pirate-chief had done earlier, even sending Habrocomes on his way to search for Anthia with apologies and gifts from the colonial administration (*Ephes.* 4.4.1–2). In short order the prefect will also arrest and crucify Kyno, correcting his earlier misjudgment by punishing the truly guilty party (4.4.2). Demonstrating his consistent concern for maintaining law and order, he will later send a force of soldiers, led by his relative Polydus, to hunt down a marauding bandit gang, which as it happens is also holding Anthia captive (5.3.1; 5.5.2).

Before he leaves, Habrocomes thanks the prefect for his “deliverance” (σωτηρία; 4.4.2), a term that not only explicitly affirms the prefect as a benevolent ruler, but also implicitly associates Roman provincial authority with the beneficent providence of the gods, particularly Helios and Isis, to whom both Habrocomes and Anthia pray and give thanks as providers of σώτεια (cf. 4.2.8; 4.3.3; 5.4.6; 5.9.5, 10; 5.13.4; 5.15.2).⁹⁰ Under the providence of Isis, Rome, at least in this remarkable instance, appears as a mediator of the salvation and safety promised to Habrocomes and Anthia (see the ora-

⁸⁹ With respect to *repetundae* legislation, which in principle enabled provincials to be heard and redressed for abuses by Roman officials, Peter A. Brunt argues that “[i]n practice the provincials were usually at the mercy of the proconsul, who was virtually absolute in his province . . . Their best hope lay in his probity and courage. In general he was restrained from indulging in or permitting extortion only by his conscience, or regard for his own reputation” (“*Laus Imperii*,” in *Roman Imperialism: Readings and Sources* [ed. C. B. Champion; Interpreting Ancient History 3; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004], 163–85 [178]).

⁹⁰ Schwartz points out how the failed execution of Habrocomes, rather than shaming the prefect as the administrator of unjustified violence, actually reaffirms the prefect’s power by ascribing to him the honorable quality of σωτηρία for freeing Habrocomes and punishing Kyno (“Courtroom Scenes,” 138). While certainly the manifest sense of the scene, I would argue that an underlying uneasiness about colonial violence persists here and throughout the narrative. Unlike Schwartz, who denies Habrocomes’ ordeals convey any “religious” significance (134), I am suggesting that, by situating the prefect’s σωτηρία in the larger context of the gods’ σωτηρία, Xenophon does in fact imbue his suffering with “religious” meaning.

cle at 1.6.2). With Habrocomes regaining his free status, the story (slowly) turns toward the “better fate” also promised to Habrocomes and Anthia, who will be reunited and soon thereafter return to Ephesus where “the rest of their life together” will again be “one long festival” (1.10.1; 5.15.3).

NOVEL CONCLUSIONS

In the end, the ideological difference between Xenophon’s ancient romance—in which youth and maiden return to being “first” among the Ephesians after their *escape* from slavery—and Mark’s Gospel—in which those who wish to be “first” among Jesus’ followers must *embrace* being “last,” becoming “slave of all”—seems clear. In each text, after all, the crucifixion of the hero looks forward to the “happy ending” distinguishing the respective political contexts of early Christian and Greco-Roman narratives.⁹¹ Writing to encourage a community experiencing the chaos of the Judean Revolt and expecting overt (and imminent) persecution by both Judean and Roman authorities, the sober gospel stylizes the horror of Jesus’ death and exhorts readers to “endure to the end to be saved” (Mark 13:13), taking the threat of their torture and death as seriously as it takes Jesus’. Seemingly abandoned by his God, Mark’s Jesus is utterly shattered as he dies, though his death is charged with counter-cultural significance: he gives his life as a “ransom” that liberates “many” from the present religious and political order and he will return to gather the “elect”—a “transcultural community” of faithful Jewish and Gentile followers (10:45; 13:26–27).⁹²

By comparison, Xenophon may seem to write a “merely” entertaining fiction that provides his educated, urban male readers with a vicarious experience of almost cartoonish suffering that has no

⁹¹ Perkins contrasts the ancient romances, which typically end with the wedding or reunion of the youth and maiden, with the early Christian martyr *acta*, which offer a counter-fiction with “death as a happy ending” (*Suffering Self*, 15–76). Here I am extending her insights to include the Gospel of Mark among early Christian novelistic texts.

⁹² On the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark’s Gospel, see Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 25–39. For an overview of the issues raised by Mark 10:45 more generally and *λύτρον* in particular, see Evans, *Mark*, 119–25. On the composition of the “elect” to be gathered by the Son of Man at his parousia, see Samuel, “Colonial Cross,” 215.

lasting effect and ultimately reaffirms the social status quo by allowing an aesthetic escape from the routine pressures of a privileged life.⁹³ Habrocomes' crucifixion results in multiple miraculous rescues. His near-death experience, along with Anthia's erotically-charged suffering, amounts to the price the chaste couple pays to return to their aristocratic status among the urban Greeks in the present social order. The difference between the ancient gospel and the romance thus mirrors the vastly different political landscapes from which they emerge.⁹⁴

That is not the only story that can be told, however. As I have argued here, the ideological contrast between the Gospel of Mark and Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale* becomes blurred (yet, crucially, not erased) as both texts produce "novel men" whose emotional and physical vulnerability contests inherited models of manliness, with which they nevertheless remain in continuity through the invocation of prior canonical texts. In the romance, Homeric heroes become "hapless heroes" as the glory of individual armed combat is traded for the virtue of the chaste couple.⁹⁵ In the gospel the Davidic king of Israel, whose militaristic manhood was being revived by messianic pretenders and other defiant resistant movements prior to and during the first Judean revolt, becomes the defeated and crucified Messiah. Likewise, in both texts classical philosophical representations of the self-mastered male subject are taken to extremes that effect the breakdown of the ideal: not only is the traditional connection between "active" self-mastery and mastery over others downplayed or even dismissed in favor of "passive" endurance, but both Jesus and Habrocomes are represented as excessively passive and even effeminized according to the terms of classical philosophical discourse.

Whether resurrected or rescued, however, in scenes before Roman officials both Jesus and Habrocomes are also consistently constructed as colonial subjects whose unjust suffering under the present imperial

⁹³ For this line of interpreting the ancient Greek romance, see, with notable differences between them, Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 101–3; Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 77–103; Balot, "Foucault, Chariton, and the Masculine Self," 136–39; and Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine*, 95, 99.

⁹⁴ On the elite readership of the ancient romances, see Susan A. Stephens, "Who Read Ancient Novels?," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (ed. J. Tatum; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 405–18. On the conservatism and elitist perspective of the ancient romance, see Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 77–103.

⁹⁵ See Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry*, 15–25.

order highlights the need for the intervention of the divine order to restore social justice as well as personal honor. In both the gospel and the romance, it is the vulnerable resistance of the male subject that strategically exposes the arbitrary imposition of empire as each text plays out the violence of colonial rule upon the submissive body of the respective hero. In both texts ironic status reversals (from slave to free or from criminal to king) in scenes of trial and torture allow the reader privileged insight into each hero's "true" identity and innocence, while also unveiling how Roman governors can conspire (even unconsciously) with the duplicitous machinations of local authorities, while denying any direct responsibility, thereby placing colonial order ahead of a concern for justice. In his passion narrative, Mark uses irony to convert Jesus' humiliation into the Messiah's prophetic honor, all at the expense of the Judean authorities who condemned and mocked him. In Xenophon's romance, however, it is the Roman governor himself who eventually restores Habrocomes' honor and free status, which is paradoxically only clearly proven by the punishments typically meted out to slaves.

Yet the sharp contrast, upheld by recent scholarship, between the Gospel of Mark's anti-authoritarian stance on the one hand and the *Ephesian Tale's* elitist investment in law and order on the other is not unambiguous. As Habrocomes' "hearing" before the prefect of Egypt overlaps with his earlier domestic trial before a pirate chief in Tyre, Xenophon subtly hints that the justice of a Roman official is neither better nor worse than the justice of a barbarian outlaw. Xenophon continues to question the difference between legitimate and illegitimate authority (even more adamantly) in scenes of attempted sexual assault against Anthia. Roman officials may hunt down the bandit gangs who have taken her captive, but even imperial soldiers appear to be no better than rapacious rogues when they are moved to possess and even violate Anthia after securing her rescue (*Ephes.* 2.13.3–8; 5.4.5–7). Here prefects and pirates, Roman officials and barbarian outlaws, appear to be equally, if differently, unpredictable in their capacity for both compassion and violence.⁹⁶ A similar critical awareness troubles the political imaginary of Mark's Gospel. Like Xenophon, Mark subtly overlaps two scenes of trial and torture so as to indict

⁹⁶ Here I am making specific some suggestive hints offered by Haynes, *Fashioning the Feminine*, 155. See also Burrus, "Mimicking Virgins."

both Roman officials and the collaborating Judean elite for the death of Jesus. More broadly, Mark also positions Roman authorities (“governors and kings”) alongside Judean officials (“councils and synagogues”) as future persecutors of Mark’s community, whose counter-cultural message mimics the reach of the empire itself in its intended geographical expansion (Mark 13:9–13). Yet, like the *Ephesian Tale*, the Gospel of Mark imagines Rome as an instrument of divine justice, punishing the Judean elite for the murder of Jesus just as the prefect of Egypt will send out troops against the bandit gang that holds Anthia (*Ephes.* 5.3.1).⁹⁷

Neither Xenophon nor Mark, however, imaginatively subjects Rome itself to any form of higher justice, divine or poetic. Instead, an underlying ambivalence, a simultaneous desire for and suspicion of Roman dominion, is common to both the ancient romance and the gospel.⁹⁸ Mark, of course, remains more openly oppositional in his apocalyptic longing for an alternative imperial order, for the “empire of God.” Yet Xenophon’s more nuanced appreciation for the complexities of domination and resistance, providence and imperialism, especially as these themes are enacted by a virginal couple threatened and protected by both the Roman Empire and the gods, perhaps hints at a dangerous compromise to which Mark cannot quite fully admit: that the imposition of the divine order doubles, even when it intends to displace, the imposition of the imperial order.

As I have tried to show here, Mark’s Jesus and Xenophon’s Habrocomes represent negotiations of traditional and marginalized gender

⁹⁷ Moore (“Mark and Empire”) notes how, by directing the force of his political critique against the indigenous elite, Mark has unwittingly played according to the rules set by Roman colonial policy, which divided the provincial populace against itself by allowing local elites to rule indirectly on behalf of Roman imperial interests. Images of the Jerusalem temple’s desolation and destruction, along with the chaos and suffering that follow in their wake, are generally read as allusions to the events of the Judean revolt against Rome, which ended disastrously with Titus’s soldiers breaking the siege and burning the temple, events which Mark implicitly sees as punishment for the elite’s general corruption as well as their conspiracy against Jesus (12:7–9; 13:1–23; cf. Moore, “Mark and Empire,” 140–43). In Mark 13:9, “governors and kings” most likely refers to Roman prefects and client rulers, while “councils” (συνέδρια) may denote either Judean or Greek assemblies.

⁹⁸ Moore (“Mark and Empire”) draws on the work of postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha to articulate the “colonial ambivalence” that animates Mark’s representations of Roman imperial authority. Also see Samuel, “Colonial Cross.” I am here extending Burrus’s arguments in “Mimicking Virgins” to include Xenophon’s romance and Mark’s Gospel.

representations. Like other forms of imaginative male self-fashioning under empire, they embody masculine identities destabilized within the ambivalent play of colonial power. So too do Mark's Gospel and Xenophon's romance engage the political context of empire, though on significantly distinct terms. By reading masculinity as a moment of shared discourse, however, I have intended to illustrate how the intersection of empire and masculinity begins to undermine clear contrasts between the literary politics of "pagan" and early Christian texts.

SCRIPT(UR)ING GENDER IN ACTS:
THE PAST AND PRESENT POWER OF *IMPERIUM**

Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele

In his groundbreaking *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault moves to center views of sexuality within the confines and constraints of a discursively constructed understanding of human culture—one that fully appreciates the intersection of rhetoric and power.¹ Similarly, in our attempt to think about gender in Acts we are especially interested in how this text thinks with gender—how gender is intertwined with the wider range of discourses that intersect to make up the tapestry of early Christian culture. The broader configuration that we explore here involves more specifically the intersection of gender, religion, colonial/territorial expansion and the appropriation and redeployment of a particular historical and cultural past. It is our contention, moreover, that to appreciate fully the discourses related to sexuality and gender in early Christianity an examination is necessary regarding the ways in which these texts can be calibrated with wider discursive threads apparent elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean world.

BEGINNING FROM THE CENTER

In a stimulating essay on the subject, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill traces out how, in the first century C.E., Augustus radically altered what came before him, establishing and fostering a significantly new cultural and social paradigm. In particular, Wallace-Hadrill emphasizes the dramatic shift that took place in this period of transition, from a focus on “local knowledge” to “universal knowledge” as constituent

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¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley; New York: Vintage, 1980).

of the Augustan program,² a shift that brought with it a rupture in patterns of authority. As Wallace-Hadrill notes, “Augustus’ achievement was not just the establishment of a new political order, but also of a new cultural order. Though it defined itself by reference to the past and to Republican tradition, the new cultural order was differently constructed and reproduced, by *ratio* not *consuetudo*.”³ Cicero’s praise of Varro—“When we were like strangers abroad and lost in our own city, your books led us back home, so to speak, so that at last we were able to recognise who and where we were” (*Acad. post.* 1.9)⁴—aptly illustrates that the basic thrust of this shift was the ability to provide a conceptual (indeed cognitive) space in which people could *place* themselves and in which time and territory coalesced to create a meaningful *locus* for (especially male elite) identity within the frame of Roman imperial aspirations and imaginations.

Fundamental to the context that Wallace-Hadrill outlines is the new role performed by the antiquarian, as one who possesses the sole ability and authority to locate (and hence arbitrate) the values of the past.⁵ Power thus comes to rest in the hands of those capable of retrieving and manipulating the tradition on a grand scale, in many respects supplanting, in the process, more traditional *loci* of power and authority (such as temples and courts). As a result, an important transformation takes place between republic and empire in terms of this universalizing strategic use of knowledge of the past. It is not accidental, then, that this shift is intimately connected with Roman imperial expansion and colonization, as universal governance demands a monolithic sense of what it means to be a Roman male—including a totalizing grasp of the past placed in service of the present.

While perhaps not as entirely “new” as Wallace-Hadrill might have it, this Augustan framework nonetheless offers an especially good model for understanding some of the intriguing moves made in literature and art in the first century C.E., including in early

² Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “*Mutatio Morum*: The Idea of a Cultural Revolution,” in *The Roman Cultural Revolution* (ed. T. Habinek and A. Schiesaro; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3–22 (20).

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 13.

⁵ As Wallace-Hadrill further notes, “The ‘memory of good men,’ as Varro put it, now started from books, not oral tradition. The noble priest and jurisprudent not only finds his authority subverted, but is subjected to contumely as the man who has betrayed his own ancestry” (*ibid.*, 14).

Christian narratives such as the Acts of the Apostles. The impulse to re-present the past for a contemporary agenda and, conversely, to reify that present program through an appropriation, rendition and reconfiguration of what “came before,” provided a strong impetus for a variety of different cultural and political (re)constructive projects spanning the empire, from the Roman West to the Greek East. In his praise of the capital of the empire, for instance, Livy embeds the story of Rome in the past mytho-history of the pre-Romans,⁶ thereby reinterpreting that past as a prelude to present glory, with the primary objective being the grounding of this “new era” in a respected ancient and virile history. Vergil’s *Aeneid* does something similar with the stories of Homer, appropriating Greek epic and placing it in service of Roman hegemonic claims and aims. Unlike Ovid’s work,⁷ Vergil’s epic provides a foundation stone for the Roman Empire and it does so, again, by grafting this story onto a larger meta-narrative structure. It is this act (and art) of transplanting a story that becomes significant, especially with respect to the social modes of communication that were available and that proved persuasive in this time period.

⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers a similar kind of reading of Rome, his “new found home.” One important overlap between Livy and Dionysius in this respect, and of special interest in light of the Augustan program outlined above, is that both of these writers (one Roman, the other Greek) seek to negotiate the relationship between valued “past traditions” and “changes” that have been undertaken by prominent “founding” figures. Here the past is reconfigured in light of the sweeping changes taking place at the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire. See especially Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 110–36 (on Livy); and David L. Balch, “ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΣΕΩΣ. Jesus as Founder of the Church in Luke-Acts: Form and Function,” in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (ed. T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele; SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 139–88, esp. 154–83 (on Dionysius and Plutarch). In some ways, these later imperial historians differ from someone like Polybius, who places much more emphasis on the *mos maiorum* as a constituent element of the “past,” which he contrasts with “contemporary” Roman degeneration (see Craig B. Champion, *Cultural Politics in Polybius’s Histories* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004], 173–203).

⁷ See, for example, Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, 12–13, where a shift takes place between the myths of the gods to the heroes of the more recent past. Ovid, however, makes the gods “all too human” and myth becomes rather banal as a result. Thus, the story of the past does not necessarily serve the full aim of the glorification of Augustus, as is the case with Vergil (Ovid’s account may even contain an anti-Augustan edge; see the still useful analysis by Charles Segal, “Myth and Philosophy in the *Metamorphoses*: Ovid’s Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion of Book XV,” *American Journal of Philology* 90 [1969]: 257–92).

A premiere example of this kind of appropriation can be found in Augustan politically inspired artistic representation, where classical images and art from the Greek age were taken over and placed in the service of Augustan imperial aspirations, especially the “moral” agenda of the empire.⁸ As Paul Zanker observes, “[t]he pediments of Classical and Hellenistic temples had usually either narrated a myth or dramatized a battle . . . Now, however, the figures are simply arranged beside one another in axial symmetry and represent either an abstract meaning or indirect references to the princeps.”⁹ In short, fundamental in this respect was not so much the narration of a “story” but the invocation of specific values or socio-cultural images that were expected to resonate with the proposed spectator. In recent studies of imperial art this facet of Roman representation has received more attention,¹⁰ with further nuanced appreciation of the role that location and context play in determining the meaning and significance that specific artistic representations were intended to invoke.¹¹ In this manner, the potent images of empire (e.g., in

⁸ For further discussion of this Augustan emphasis in law and society, see Mary Rose D’Angelo’s essay in this volume.

⁹ Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 201. Also see Davina Lopez’s essay in this volume.

¹⁰ Formative in this line of interpretation is Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art* (trans. A. Snodgrass and A. Künzl-Snodgrass; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). His analysis of the Aeneas panel on the Ara Pacis is representative of his approach as a whole. The depiction of Aeneas draws on numerous and chronologically different periods of Greek precedents (including specific Roman features as well), but, rather than being a “chaos of forms” (18), Hölscher argues that this phenomenon points to a “flexibility” (16) in representation, which demonstrates that “Roman art based its choice of visual paradigms not primarily on considerations of style or taste, but according to content and subject. It settled on different patterns, drawing on different periods of Greek art, for the different classes of subject-matter” (20–21). In particular, the depiction of Aeneas in predominant Classical forms on the Ara Pacis was the primary means by which to communicate the *auctoritas* and *pietas* of this ancestral character who, in this context, was standing in for the emperor himself (81). Also see David Castriota, *The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Imagery of Abundance in Later Greek and Early Roman Imperial Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), who, drawing on Hölscher, notes the intermixing or synthesis of symbolism (e.g., the association of traditional Dionysian imagery with the dominant Apollonian depictions, the latter of which provided the prevailing model by which Augustus’s image was constructed; cf. 106–23), but also the persistence of an overarching Roman overlay or “denominator” that provides an “overtly ethical aspect to the mythic ancestors or founders . . .” (173–74), all of which aligns well with the Augustan emphasis on cultural and social renewal.

¹¹ For example, Christopher H. Hallett notes the significant function of actual

statues, reliefs and monuments) that preoccupied Augustus's program of reconstruction and "renewal" reconfigured the past in very specific ways, communicating values such as heroic spirit, self-control and authority, *virtus*, beneficence, divine order and mandate, charismatic leadership, reasoned governance and so forth. It is critical to note, moreover, that all of these components of the ideology of *imperium* are inextricably linked to elite male performance in the ancient world.¹² This is not just the comportment of the ruler; it is, finally, the representation of the one who fundamentally embodies all appropriate masculine qualities of rule, which is the first step to ruling over all others. The past thus serves as a reservoir of images and tropes of identification that could be deployed and redirected, sometimes to different ends depending on the specific context, in order to reinforce the dominant values and aims of empire and its embedded mechanisms of power.¹³ As a result, then, rather than the past being considered a predecessor to the present, a singular moment is generated wherein the past fuses with the current context, which in turn embodies all the former glory in an immediate and unmediated manner.¹⁴ The story evoked thus takes second seat to the rationale

space and location in deciphering the ancient viewing experience (*The Roman Nude: Heroic Portrait Statuary 200 B.C.–A.D. 300* [Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 240–42). He provides the example of the statue of Cupid in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Rome, which was set up by Livia to represent "Gaius . . . in the *habitus* of Cupid," whereas a very similar statue, described by Martial in the temple of the Via Appia, was rather an "image of Hercules" (240). Outside of these specific contexts, these heroic statuary would look very similar (as Hallett notes, to a modern viewer they would both appear simply as "theomorphic portraits"; 240), but for an ancient viewer the context would have determined the intended signification.

¹² The literature on this particular point is well rehearsed in recent scholarship. See Diana Swancutt's essay in this volume for a summary of the broad consensus that has emerged.

¹³ As Andrew Stewart rightly reminds us, images of rulers in the ancient context did not merely express the "social ideology"; they in fact helped constitute and produce it (*Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* [HCS 11; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], 69).

¹⁴ Similar to Wallace-Hadrill, Zanker has argued that this phenomenon represents an "utterly new narrative technique" (*Power of Images*, 205), although, admittedly, the very use of the term "narrative" in this context is somewhat misleading. Zanker notes, for instance, that "[t]he ceremonies of state which Augustus initiated in connection with the new Forum and Temple of Mars insured that in the future the glory of the present would be enacted against the background of the Roman past, *now so neatly reorganized*" (ibid., 214; our emphasis). For a fuller discussion of the role of this "propaganda" in imperial interactions, see Gary Gilbert, "The List

and motivation for its invocation. Herein the elite masculine performance of the *princeps* in particular is concretized as a testimony to the embodied ideals of empire that he and his household under him incorporate. The use of culturally authoritative images of the past offers a potent form for justifying this imperial male comportment.

It is critical, however, to note that all of this reimag(in)ing of the past serves first and foremost the *imperial* pretensions and aspirations of the Roman Empire. Hence, at a basic level a correlation exists between the use of this past and colonial expansion itself. It comes as no surprise, then, that such images abounded in empire.¹⁵ In fact, the power of *imperium* evident in colonization was one of the many features of imperial rule lauded in Roman political and cultural iconography. Of course, territory as such becomes a major preoccupation with the Roman imperial administrators across the spectrum¹⁶ and, in light of the Augustan paradigm delineated above, it is to be expected that the use of the distant past would correspond with the deployment of territory more generally. Space and time become inextricably linked in this way as invocations of the past are correlated with mappings of imperial territory. This impulse took on varying incarnations in the literary works of the imperial period, manifested in such diverse forms as encyclopedic collections of curiosities to

of Nations in Acts 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 497–529; idem, “Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity in the Worldview of Luke-Acts,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 233–56; and Jaś Elsner, “Inventing *Imperium*: Texts and the Propaganda of Monuments in Augustan Rome,” in *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (ed. J. Elsner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 32–53.

¹⁵ For a brief survey of the presence of statues (as one example) in the Roman Empire, see Peter Stewart, *Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 157–83. Stewart notes that images were regionally contextualized (there were variations in representation between the Greek East and Rome, for instance) and there were also social differences as well that affected the role of statues (for example, Britain had strikingly fewer statues than other parts of the empire).

¹⁶ On the particularly important role of Agrippa’s mapping in this Roman desire for control of space and territory, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (trans. H. Leclerc; Jerome Lectures 19; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 95–122. It is noteworthy in this respect that Augustus himself was known for having dabbled in the geographical genre, focusing on composing extensive lists of imperial holdings (see *ibid.*, 171–87). Cf. Sorcha Carey, *Pliny’s Catalogue of Culture: Art and Empire in the Natural History* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 61–74.

travel narratives, itineraries and guides. The way in which this mechanism could be used to further imperial positioning is evident in Strabo's work.¹⁷ Similarly, Pliny the Elder's encyclopedia simultaneously maps as well as (re)produces Roman colonial order.¹⁸ As the past was to serve the (re)imagining of the imperial present, so also was territory being remapped within a similar paradigm. The focus throughout was on *imperium*—masculinity on display in and through the control of territory, both physically in terms of governance of regions of empire and metaphorically with respect to the cultivation and redistribution of the images of the past. These were no *new men* conquering the *oikeumene*; these were men of old—heroes, gods, warriors—who reified the potency of this imperial regime for the very purposes of expansion. As such they helped solidify the privileged elite status that was essential for Roman imperial domination and the various forms of discourse that encased this display in promises of peace and prosperity.

IMPERIAL RECONFIGURATIONS

Similar kinds of strategies were practiced by subjects situated outside of the main center of power in the empire, employed and redeployed by the Greeks who mimicked the kinds of broader narrative tactics and cultural scripts used by their Roman colonizers. As both elite males and intermediaries within the various local "webs of power"¹⁹ in the eastern part of the empire, Second Sophistic writers were especially adept in this for(u)m of narrative engagement, offering deference to the Roman *imperium* while also engaging in

¹⁷ As Katherine Clarke notes, Strabo's "... interest in the past of places is determined by their present identities and the traditions associated with them; and it is consistent with the recurrent mention of the links between each place and Rome, at the expense of the relationships, spatial, commercial, and cultural, between different places within the empire" (*Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* [Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999], 326).

¹⁸ Cf. Carey, *Pliny's Catalogue of Culture*, 35–47.

¹⁹ This phrase comes from Douglas R. Edwards, *Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), who has produced a helpful study of the ways in which elite intermediaries (in particular Chariton, Josephus and Luke) in the eastern part of the empire negotiated regional status through their respective construction of their religious and cultural heritages (with respect to the use of the past in these negotiations, cf. 28–48).

practices that amount, at times, to a subversion of Roman domination through the deployment of a variety of tactics of resistance. The past thus became a site for contesting dominant cultural claims while simultaneously also constructing and producing a wide array of alternative cultural and civic identities enacted by Greeks who had a mixed relationship to Roman imperial rule, as both subject to Roman power but also elite males in their own right.²⁰

Pausanias (2d cent. C.E.) provides a particularly good example of this combination in his *Description of Greece*, where he adeptly interweaves geographical description with a “mythography” of the past.²¹ As Jaś Elsner has argued, in Pausanias’s guide Greece becomes a discursive site of reconstructive identity, wherein an ideal portrait of the past informs the present.²² Although some scholars have argued that Pausanias relies on a more Hellenistic frame of mapping as opposed to the more territorial focus of the Roman enterprise,²³ it is intriguing that Pausanias’s “description” of Greece represents something of a “florilegium”²⁴ of both present and past images related to Greece, which functions to help him compete for, lay claim to and negotiate an elite male space in empire.

One clear example of this phenomenon is found in Pausanias’s discussion of Corinth, which was a particularly good city to think and argue with in the ancient world.²⁵ In contrast to imperial geo-

²⁰ See Simon Swain’s summarizing assessment of the diversity of ways in which this group identification practice was manifested; *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 65–100. Cf. E. L. Bowie, “Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic,” *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 3–41.

²¹ Although not dealing with Pausanias explicitly, the fictional (and ideological) nature of this wider enterprise has been explored by James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 172–214, and is useful for helping one appreciate more fully the kind of ideological mapping project that Pausanias was engaged in.

²² Jaś Elsner, “Structuring ‘Greece’: Pausanias’s *Periegesis* as a Literary Construct,” in *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (ed. S. E. Alcock, J. F. Cherry and J. Elsner; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3–20 (18–19).

²³ In her essay on the subject, Ada Cohen argues that the Romans tended towards more concrete and politicized expressions of territorial representation rather than the more flowing, abstract representational nature of Hellenistic imaging, thereby situating Pausanias’s work within narrative strategies of the Hellenistic “viewing experience,” accounting for his more “fragmented world-view” (“Art, Myth, and Travel in the Hellenistic World,” in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner, *Pausanias*, 93–126).

²⁴ Elsner, “Structuring ‘Greece,’” 19. Cf. Cohen, “Art, Myth, Travel,” 96.

²⁵ On this conceptual versatility of Corinth in terms of ancient Greek values, see Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New

graphy, Pausanias offers, at least on the surface, a geography of *paideia*—of “being there” and “present” to a valued past. Indeed, the “real” Corinth with which Pausanias is engrossed is the one destroyed in 146 B.C.E. (by the Roman imperial commander Mummius), not the Roman colony established by Caesar in 44 B.C.E. (cf. *Descr.* 2.1.2; 2.3.6). History and geography thus undergo a certain mythologization as a result and the present symbolic world is restructured in light of the honored past, which is also continuous in some ways with the present. For example, Pausanias’s extended discussion of the sanctuary of Persuasion and its rituals (in the past and present) related to the placation (and honoring) of Apollo and Artemis (2.7.7–8) is followed by a seemingly casual remark that near this sanctuary was the site of the imperial cult. Completely bypassing its importance or significance in the colonial present, Pausanias rather notes the role of this specific locale with respect to the mythic past, when this house belonged to Kleon the dictator, thus resituating the focus of the reader in the distant Greek past. As a result, the Romans are consistently “written out” as the new founders, over and against the “original” (Greek) Corinthians (cf. 2.3.1, 7), whose history, culture and traditions Pausanias celebrates throughout. Moreover, this “house” that is described in the guide also becomes a site of contestation and identity formation. Indeed, as Pausanias further notes, in front of Kleon’s house lies a shrine to Aratus, the hero who fought the tyrant Nikokles and liberated Corinth (2.8.1–4). The reference to Aratus in conjunction with the mention of the imperial cultic sanctuary is particularly noteworthy. Although Pausanias never explicitly criticizes Roman rule in the present,²⁶ the not so subtle combination of Aratus resisting tyranny with the mention of the imperial cult is striking.²⁷

York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 121; as well as Luca Graverini, “Corinth, Rome, and Africa: A Cultural Background for the Tale of the Ass,” in *Space in the Ancient Novel* (ed. M. Paschalis and S. Frangoulidis; ANSup 1; Groningen: Barkhuis and the University Library Groningen, 2002), 58–77, esp. 60–66. Cf. Favorinus’s oration on Corinth, which illustrates this feature well (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 37).

²⁶ Although, as Christian Habicht notes, Pausanias is generally ambivalent to Roman rule (*Pausanias’ Guide to Ancient Greece* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 124–25).

²⁷ The whole account details the rise of Antigonos, the battle with Kleomenes, the eventual liberation of Sparta and the final treachery against Aratus (and other persuasive speakers) by Philip (*Descr.* 2.8.1–9.5). Further, the account concludes with a quote from Hesiod related to the reciprocal nature of evil (*Op.* 265–66), thus reinforcing a more subtle moral/political agenda (particularly the celebration of pro-democratic impulses and the role of the *polis* in *paideia* and rule) behind the various

In this way, the image of Aratus stands juxtaposed to that of the imperial family, in a counterpose, say, to Augustus assuming the role of Aeneas in the Ara Pacis.²⁸ The story that Pausanias tells, then, is not of mere arcane interest, but a politically charged figuration that either consciously or unconsciously casts Roman rule in light of this same tyranny and treachery that Aratus resisted.²⁹ In thus seamlessly reconstituting a mythic past toward a final political rhetorical end (the celebration of the overthrow of tyrants of all kinds), Pausanias shows just how deftly he is capable of interweaving diverse strands together through this spatial and temporal “landscape.” Here, then, lies an important correlation with the Roman imperial agenda—the present becomes cloaked in the garments of past mythology, but one which in some sense subverts the Roman use of the past in so far as it does not reaffirm those in control, but rather celebrates a past era and alternative authority structures. In this, elite male “power-brokers”³⁰ such as Pausanias find themselves operating within the nexus of the intersection of various modes of colonial interaction, including assimilation, cooperation, negotiation, cooption and subversion. Pausanias’s *Description of Greece* thus represents his own attempt to negotiate his space within the present order of things; his status, as the guide of the past that he narrates, also positions him to mediate something of its power as well.

threads of seemingly “harmless” information Pausanias supplies. James I. Porter notes the particular importance to Pausanias of cultivating the preservation of freedom in his project of restoring Greek cultural memory (“Ideals and Ruins: Pausanias, Longinus, and the Second Sophistic,” in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner, *Pausanias*, 63–92 [75]).

²⁸ See n. 10 above.

²⁹ Cf. Jaś Elsner, “Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World,” *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 3–29 (19–20). Elsner reads Pausanias as no mere “traveler,” but as someone invested in resisting Roman imperial power (esp. 5–6, 17–20). The delineation of the lineage of the Argives in 2.18.4–19.2 is similarly illuminating in this respect. Pausanias provides an extended listing of the various successions to power, but ends with the rather intriguing line: “But from time immemorial the Argives have equal rights and the rule of law, so they reduced royal authority to a minimum, leaving Medon son of Keisos and his successors nothing more than the name of king. The people removed the remnants of sovereignty from Melas in the ninth generation after Medon” (2.19.2; translation taken from Peter Levi, trans., *Pausanias: Guide to Greece* [2 vols.; rev. ed.; New York: Penguin, 1979]). Here, as in the previous story related to Aratus and Antigonos, there is a presentation of ideal civic virtue with respect to the polity, one which undermines absolute sovereignty of the one over the many.

³⁰ Again, this term is borrowed from Edwards, who understands the eastern elite males to be particularly concerned with “cosmic power-brokering” (*Religion and Power*, 91–118).

This one instance in Pausanias's lengthy treatment of the Corinth region in his guide to Greece illustrates the degree to which Pausanias has covered the present landscape he describes with the mist of the mythic past. From beginning to end, his discussion is saturated with references to heroes—but particularly deities—of Greece's past glory.³¹ Zeus, Apollo, Hercules, Artemis, Asclepius, Hermes, Poseidon, Demeter, Athena are among the many deities who appear throughout—and in all cases Pausanias focuses on the sanctuaries in which they are worshipped or honored.³² He thus uses the presence and power of numinous and heroic manifestations to manufacture a landscape that is brimming with sacred power and paradigmatic virtue. These stories, brought into conjunction with various sanctuaries and located in particular regions under *polis* control, are functioning in much the same way that the mythic images do for Augustan propaganda—they provide a rhetorical subtext, infusing the focalized object with the power and authority of the past.³³ Herein lies a particularly potent subversive strategy, one which clearly denotes Pausanias's project not as a nostalgic longing for past glory, but as a gaze that looks back fully on the Roman Empire from the perspective of elite male intermediaries outside of the center of power. Thus, his own

³¹ As Porter notes, in Pausanias's account one is confronted with an "excess of *presence*: the past bulks all too large in his field of vision, it is far too *immediate*, to be balanced by the actual present" ("Ideals and Ruins," 69 [his emphasis]).

³² In fact, although heroes of one sort or another are mentioned in this section, in most cases they are connected with shrines or sanctuaries. For instance, while the short section on Theseus (2.32.7–9) begins with mention of Theseus's feat in recovering his father's sword and sandals from under the rock, Pausanias immediately goes on to note that the name of the place—"Theseus's Rock"—replaced its earlier designation as an altar to Zeus. In a similar vein, when Pausanias mentions Demosthenes, it is in passing—he is much more interested in the sanctuary of Poseidon, in which Demosthenes' tomb is housed (2.33.3–4).

³³ Pausanias pays little attention to the current ritualistic nature of what goes on in the various locales he mentions. Archaeological evidence suggests that many of these former Greek sacred sites underwent significant changes in ritualistic practice under Roman colonial rule in Corinth (see Nancy Bookidis, "The Sanctuaries of Corinth," in *Corinth: The Centenary 1896–1996* [ed. C. K. Williams II and N. Bookidis; Corinth 20; Athens: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003], 247–59 [255–57]). Part of the debate surrounding the purpose of Pausanias's work relates precisely to the nature of his descriptions. If he were truly interested in offering guidance for sacred pilgrimages (see Ian Rutherford, "Tourism and the Sacred: Pausanias and the Traditions of Greek Pilgrimage," in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner, *Pausanias*, 40–52), then why does he focus so much on the religious past (which has lead Karim W. Arafat to suggest that Pausanias is more of a "historian" like Herodotus; cf. his *Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996])?

performance as the broker of both the power of the past and the Greek East in the *habitus* of this past contributes to Pausanias's identity as elite male individual and also as thoroughly representative of a class of people seeking to position themselves within the Roman Empire.

While Pausanias himself is the "guide" in his travel narrative—both present as an "eyewitness" to the current sites but also generally absent in terms of his overt personal experience—Aelius Aristides offers quite a different portrait in his personal account in *The Sacred Tales*, a description (or diary) of his various journeys in the hope of finding treatment for physical ailments that have beset him. At first glance, Pausanias's and Aristides' respective works may seem to be quite different,³⁴ but a closer reading reveals some striking similarities that further help us to appreciate the kind of cultural dynamics taking place in the Greek East with respect to the intersection of territory and the past. Indeed, as Judith Perkins reminds us, different reconfigurations, disruptions and dislocations of space signify critically important elements in the resistance of specific cultures to dominant hegemonic discourses.³⁵ While different groups in diverse parts of the empire will reconfigure space in alternative ways, this process of shaping space constitutes an essential aspect of identity formation.

In this respect, both Pausanias and Aristides shape their spaces in somewhat similar ways. Not only does the main character of *The Sacred Tales*, Aristides, traverse some of the same territory in Asia Minor that Pausanias covers, but the remapping that takes place configures these spaces and places of empire so as to dislocate (implicitly) imperial centers of power, which are replaced by new sites of religious authority/power and Hellenic cultural identity.³⁶ The focus of Aristides' "personal" account is his repeated visits to sanctuaries of Asclepius and thus, throughout, dreams perform a pivotal function in the narrative substructure. Whereas Pausanias appeals to the stories and traditions of Greek myth and history, Aristides' account pro-

³⁴ Rutherford notes some of the obvious ones ("Tourism and the Sacred," 51–52).

³⁵ Judith Perkins, "Social Geography in the *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*," in Paschalis and Frangoulidis, *Space in the Ancient Novel*, 118–31.

³⁶ This point of correlation is overlooked by Rutherford, who, while seeing their point of contact in terms of using "their relationship to territory to define their experience of themselves," constructs that identity as quite distinct in each case: "Pausanias uses it to define his identity as a Hellene; Aristides to chart the stations of his illness, defining his relationship with Asclepius" ("Tourism and the Sacred," 52).

vides an alternate medium (dreams, visions, oracles and omens) of connection to the past. However, the critical lynchpin between these two accounts is that, aside from their interest in sacred sites, both of these writers seek an immediacy (one that they mediate!) of the past in the present. The medium of dreams and interpretation in Aristides' account performs this role quite well. While deities play a prominent role in his journey—Asclepius predominates, but Zeus, Apollo, Hermes and others also make appearances—most striking is the repeated appearance of literary, philosophical and oratorical figures from the Greek past in Aristides' dreams. In all cases, these figures are assimilated to the character of Aristides, who is self-fashioned as an exemplary orator. Aristides receives a command from Asclepius that he should "speak in the manner of Socrates, Demosthenes, and Thucydides" (50.15).³⁷ Shortly thereafter, in another dream, he is approached by a man who compares Aristides' work to that of Plato and Demosthenes, with the explicit statement that Aristides has surpassed Demosthenes "in dignity" (50.19; cf. 50.57). In this same oration, Aristides also dreams of entering the Temple of the Ancestral Olympian Zeus, wherein he finds that he shares a tomb with Alexander the Great, both of them being honored as great cultural heroes in this sacred location: "... we both had reached the top of our professions, he in military and I in oratorical power" (50.49). The combination of military service and rhetorical display are not coincidental, as the two are often paired in the classical tradition with respect to the duty of the male citizen toward the *polis* (one thinks here of the paradigmatic Pericles, for instance). Alongside these manifestations, one can also add the dream involving an appearance of Lysias (50.59) and another detailing a visit by Sophocles (50.60). In the end, Aristides can proclaim: "It came about that I beheld all the other ancients who were most famous in literature, both prose writers and poets alike" (50.59).

Overall, Aristides thus constitutes his own *ethos* for the audience of *The Sacred Tales*. He not only consorts with the high officials of Asia Minor, but also engages in profound expressions of personal piety towards the gods, in particular Asclepius. Moreover, his devotion is

³⁷ Also see 50.18, where the mention of Demosthenes functions as an omen (cf. 50.97). English translations of *The Sacred Tales* are taken from Charles A. Behr, trans., *P. Aelius Aristides: The Complete Works* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1981–1986), 2:278–353.

rewarded by being granted the favor of divine appearances in dreams, omens, rescues (cf. 48.12–17) and general inspiration (cf. 50.45–47)—but, most of all, his role as great orator (and apparently also poet) is a direct result of his fidelity to Asclepius. In all of this, lest the spectator should overlook some of the essential contours of this self-construction, various significant literary and philosophical figures from the past are re-presented in his dreams in one form or another, so as to contribute to the emergent identity of the author himself: he is one like these great cultural heroes of old. Indeed, similar to the appropriation of the image of Aeneas by Augustus and the celebration of Aratus by Pausanias, these figures from the past mimetically reinscribe the character of the person with whom they are associated. However, different from Pausanias, in Aristides' account the images function to represent the main subject (here Aristides himself) in intertextual guise. Yet, similar to Pausanias, Aristides connects himself “experientially” and ideologically with religious sites of authority and, by his own personal attestation, of manifestations of numinous power. The use of the Greek mythic past for purposes of social prestige is evident here,³⁸ but the focus on territorial traversal also raises interesting questions for Aristides' engagement of the Roman colonial context. In fact, it is intriguing that nowhere in the rather conceited dreams of *The Sacred Tales* do we encounter a noted Roman orator such as Cicero or Quintilian. Other orators (contemporaries of Aristides), such as a certain Quadratus, who becomes governor of Asia in Aristides' time (50.63), or Pardalas (50.27), appear to be of Greek origin.³⁹ In this light, the position of Rome in the narrative becomes all the more interesting. In particular, the role of the emperor in *The Sacred Tales* illuminates some of the broader issues at stake in Aristides' presentation. In *Oration* 47, for instance, Aristides relates a

³⁸ The use of the past to display one's mastery of *paideia* was one prominent employment of the mythic Greek era in the Second Sophistic (see, e.g., Zahra Newby, “Reading Programs in Greco-Roman Art: Reflections on the Spada Reliefs,” in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body* [ed. D. Fredrick; Arethusa Books; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002], 110–48). Pausanias comes closer to this kind of enhancement of his own social standing in terms of the display of knowledge, while Aristides seems rather to be seeking to embody past cultural icons more viscerally in his own *persona*—a simulacrum of cultural identity, a direct mediation of that past glory through himself (not unlike the mediating powers of Asclepius!).

³⁹ Behr identifies this figure as C. Julius Quadratus Bassus, who was of Pergamene origin (*P. Aelius Aristides*, 438 n. 109). Pardalas is described by Aristides as “the greatest expert of the Greeks of our time in the science of oratory.”

dream in which he approaches the emperor (presumably Marcus Aurelius) with his teacher Alexander. While Aristides salutes the emperor, he does not go forward to kiss him. At the inquiry of the emperor as to why this is the case, Aristides simply proclaims that he is a worshipper of Asclepius and that the deity has instructed him not to “kiss in this fashion” (47.23). While the emperor appears rather understanding of the explanation, proclaiming “Asclepius is better than all to worship,” the rather bold refusal by a colonial subject to show deference—even if it is in a dream!—frames the broader discursive character of this text.⁴⁰ Aside from the rather bloated hubris evident throughout Aristides’ own self-construction, the broader notion seems apparent: this Greek male, sculpted in the tradition of the great Greek males of the past, directed by the god Asclepius, presents himself as a cultural, literary and religious authority in his own right. This excess of masculine presence is counterbalanced, however, by the weakness of the flesh that continually afflicts Aristides in his account. And perhaps in this we also catch a glimpse of the complexity in Aristides’ response to Rome—he is both subversive but also, as we learn from his other orations (cf. 26, 35), submissive. Thus, the male figure is both larger than life and also all too human. This may well reflect the anxieties of being an elite male intermediary under the Roman imperial thumb.⁴¹

Although Pausanias and Aristides provide only two examples, as a whole they are representative of a broader stream of writers of the Second Sophistic who utilize similar strategies for positioning themselves, their communities and their authority in terms of ancient myths and stories. Herein a broader cultural poetics also emerges,

⁴⁰ *Oration* 50 has two other significant incidents related to the emperor. The first involves Aristides’ attempts to avoid becoming an “officer of the peace” in a city that he does not name. He does not want to undertake this responsibility and, in the course of trying to get out of this task (50.71–74), he receives a letter from the emperor and his son (Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius), “which praised me in other ways and confirmed to me immunity because of my oratorical career . . .” (50.75). The second is even more interesting, as it involves a dream with the Emperor Hadrian “honoring me, who had just now become acquainted with him, and offering great hopes” (50.106). Earlier in *The Sacred Tales* Aristides does not comport himself deferentially toward the emperor, but here, in a striking reversal, the emperor yields to Aristides.

⁴¹ For further reflection on these “imperial anxieties,” see Eric Thurman’s essay in this volume (cf. Erik Gunderson’s contribution on Lucian for a slightly different albeit compatible reading).

locating both group and individual identities in a strategic mode of retrieval and redeployment of the past with the critical position of male cultural authority figures centering the discourse. The “story” of the past and its use in the present thus appears decisive for displaying proper masculine comportment. Cultural interaction, negotiation, colonization, collaboration and/or resistance are fundamentally male activities in a world in which the “universal” form—of knowledge, of law, of religious piety and devotion, of history—is fully centered on the male subject. Thus, the discursive act of reclaiming the past ultimately enacts a masculine norm that either makes or breaks the male subject in question.⁴² That is, much was at stake in the success of this retrieval and, most importantly, these gendered horizons shaped the retrieval process itself. In this respect, the focus on elite male intermediaries in the Greek East is a useful way of framing the cultural work that both Pausanias and Aristides enact and enable. They both negotiate the landscape of the present world through travel.⁴³ In similar ways, they mediate power through a variety of channels, Pausanias in his role as “guide” and Aristides in his part as an adherent of the Asclepius cult. Their “eye-witness” testimony further aids in securing their privileged status in this project. Their retrieval of the past also brings with it a celebration of a particular kind of *polis* centered masculine comportment, one which both of these writers aim or assume to embody. Religion becomes a trope in the broader discursive configuration unfolding herein, being used to bolster the male identity of those who now possess its secrets, who control its meaning and who have the ability to reveal or conceal its power. In all of this, then, elite male influence is being brokered by intermediaries who are both seeking to assert control in the very same moment that they also fall under the dominion of Roman *imperium*.

⁴² It is illuminating in this respect to examine further Lucian’s contention with Alexander the so-called “false prophet,” where two male authority figures position themselves differently vis-à-vis the past in order to secure their respective authority. One of the most effective ways in which Lucian serves to undermine Alexander is by showing that, while Alexander may claim to have descended from the ancient mythological hero Perseus (or to be a prophet of Asclepius the Healer), in reality he has no connection to these heroes of old—he is nothing but a sham and charlatan. Herein we see contention over the past on a micro-local level. On this interaction, see Erik Gunderson’s essay in this volume.

⁴³ See further Edwards, *Religion and Power*, 72–90.

Thus, in the end, we observe a diversely constructed cast of cultural authority figures appropriating the past with their own unique proclivities, but also with a view to larger colonial engagements. In this milieu, images from the past bear a multivalent and highly malleable capacity for manipulation and exploitation. These are not static signifiers, but rather dynamic simulacra that aid in self-construction (and in the potential production of difference). At the heart of this enterprise lies the reconfiguration and remapping of social and cultural space through the control and manipulation of cultural memory,⁴⁴ in so far as these remapped territories are imbued with symbolic significance through the lens of a mythic past made immediate and abundant to the reading/hearing spectator.

APPROPRIATING THE PAST IN ACTS

If the past is a critical component of imperial, intellectual and, finally, masculine imaging in the ancient world, it is no surprise that this strategy for identity formation would have numerous intersections with a text like the Acts of the Apostles, which is focused on the portrayal of male authority figures of the early Christian movement as ideal representatives of civic virtue and piety. Although the past predominantly invoked in this early Christian text is the Jewish/Israelite history of the Hebrew Bible and although it is frequently deployed in a different manner, similarities still exist between Acts and other imperial literature in terms of the universalizing tendencies in the interpretation of the past, the reconfiguration of the past in light of

⁴⁴ Jaś Elsner's analysis of Lucian's *de dea Syria* is illuminating in comparison with both Pausanias and Aristides. Elsner argues that "The Syrian Goddess and her temple's major deities . . . promise an alternative identity from the eclectic and cultural assimilations implicit in being 'Roman.' . . . The text is testimony not to the diffusion of an eastern cult . . . to the most distant regions of the Roman Empire. Rather, it attests to refocusing identity, both local and international, on a sacred centre which is in every sense peripheral—even irrelevant—within the political realities of the Roman world, but which is none the less presented as absolutely primary in its holiness. Effectively [*de dea Syria*] is an act of recentring. It suggests a new centre, not for the Roman Empire as a political entity, but for what matters most to the individual within the Roman world who speaks with the 'I' of this text (namely his identity in relation to his chosen god)" ("Describing Self in the Language of the Other: Pseudo(?) Lucian at the Temple of Hierapolis," in *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* [ed. S. Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 125–53 [151–52]).

the present and the attendant gender constructions, with present male figures being modeled on heroes from that past. One example of the function of the past in Acts is found in chapter 7, where Stephen offers an evocation of the events of the book of Exodus in which Moses takes central stage, framed by other figures from scriptural epic such as Abraham, Joseph and David. In vs. 8 of Stephen's recital of Jewish history, for instance, he states that God gave Abraham "the covenant of circumcision" and that Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac of Jacob and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. Here the patriarchal past reconfigures the present situation, where Stephen similarly performs "great wonders and signs among the people" (6:8) as Moses did before him (7:38).⁴⁵ Such correlations are significant as the recalcitrant people in the narrative (7:54–58) correspond, quite naturally, with the hard-hearted people of old depicted in Stephen's speech (7:39–43, 51–53).⁴⁶ Similar but more implicit references to the past occur as well in the portrayal of individuals modeled on characters from the past and/or in allusions to scriptural stories. Thus, Paul's experience on the road to Damascus in 9:4 can be understood to evoke God's call of Jacob in Gen 46:2–3 and of Samuel in 1 Sam 3.⁴⁷ These examples illustrate the different ways in which intertextuality surfaces when Acts either explicitly or implicitly uses specific stories from Jewish Scripture.⁴⁸ As a result, significant events

⁴⁵ Translations from the biblical text are taken from the NRSV.

⁴⁶ For a more detailed analysis of how the themes of the past intersect with Stephen's narrative context, see Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (ESEC 10; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 262–330.

⁴⁷ The history of Acts scholarship abounds with assessments of this phenomenon in Luke-Acts. Any number of studies could be chosen to illustrate this trend, but paradigmatic is perhaps David P. Moessner's study, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), where the literary and theological impact of the Hebrew Bible on Luke-Acts is seen as quintessential for Luke's narrative and ideological composition.

⁴⁸ This type of intertextuality corresponds with Vernon K. Robbins's concept of "oral-scribal intertexture," which he defines as "a text's use of any other text outside of itself, whether it is an inscription, the work of a Greek poet, noncanonical apocalyptic material, or the Hebrew Bible" (*Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* [Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1996], 41). Also see Joel B. Green, "Internal Repetition in Luke-Acts: Contemporary Narratology and Lukan Historiography," in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed. B. Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 283–99, whose following observation is representative of the consensus position on Luke's use of the Hebrew Bible: "Vis-à-vis the intertextual reverberations of the Lukan narrative

and heroes from Israel's epic past typologically set the stage for the surrounding drama in Luke's narrative.

Scripture plays out in other ways in Acts too, particularly in the form of direct quotations from the Hebrew Bible. In Acts 3:25, for example, Peter reminds his audience (and the reader) "of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed'." Here both the covenant and Abraham are mentioned in a self-evident way, followed by a quotation from Genesis (22:18 and 26:4), which seems to serve as both "reminder" and proof. As Nils Dahl observes, "Luke stresses the continuity between Abraham and the church of his own time, as some generations earlier Vergil had linked Roman history with that of Aeneas."⁴⁹

When one looks at *which* stories inform Luke's narrative, one immediately perceives a rich array and highly textured use of strategic recollections of texts that center on major events and figures from the past, be it creation, Abraham, the exodus, Moses, David, the judges or the prophets. Remarkable in all of this is that, apart from some more general references to Moses and the prophets, all mention of particular figures from the mythic past occurs in the first part of Acts. Moreover, a closer examination reveals that they are only made in the speeches of major characters such as Peter, Stephen or Paul.⁵⁰ In every one of these cases, the narrative audience of the speeches in question is identified as Jewish, an audience that can therefore be presumed (in terms of cultural associations/assumptions made by

with the LXX (i.e., external repetition), Luke inscribes himself in scriptural tradition, showing his debt to this previous story, and inviting his auditors to hear in this story the resounding continuation of that story" (290).

⁴⁹ Nils A. Dahl, "The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 139–59 (152). At the end of his study, Dahl notes that Luke strikes a balance between appreciating Abraham as a figure of the past (i.e., as historical) and inscribing his own theological agenda on the material in question (154). This attempt to balance the historical and narrative integrity of Lukan appropriation of the Hebrew narrative is consonant with most scholarship on the matter. The question, however, is whether or not the evidence bears out this extensive alignment or whether the use of Scripture does not function more closely to the manner in which the past forms a discursive cultural reservoir in the Greco-Roman materials under study earlier in this essay.

⁵⁰ The majority of the references to characters from Genesis and Exodus are made in Stephen's speech (Acts 7), followed by Peter in Acts 3 and Paul in Acts 13. References to David occur in Acts 2, 7 and 13, Samuel and Saul are mentioned in Acts 13, Solomon in Acts 7.

readers and writers in the ancient world) to be familiar with the past thus evoked and for which an argument using that past would have been perceived as meaningful and at least potentially persuasive.⁵¹

The explicit scriptural recapitulations in Acts 7 and 13 further reveal a Lukan grafting of the “present” on to these stories from and about the past.⁵² When comparing the selection of stories and figures in Acts 7 and 13, for instance, one notices that the focus is clearly different, being informed by the agenda of the speaker in question. In Acts 7 Moses is foregrounded and serves as prototype for Jesus (7:37; cf. 3:22–26), thus establishing a prophetic lineage between them, one now continued with Stephen. In Acts 2 and 13 the focus is on the royal line of descent and a link is established between David and Jesus, further tightened by quotations from the Psalms. At one level one cannot deny that in these texts the past is used to justify how the God of the Hebrew Bible continues to keep his promises or to show that this deity is still operative in the present, but now through the emergent messianic movement in Jerusalem.⁵³

⁵¹ In that same light, it can also be considered relevant that the only biblical story referred to in more general terms with a Gentile audience is the creation narrative of Gen 1. This occurs in Paul’s speech in Athens. At the Areopagus Paul refers to “the God who made the world and everything in it” (17:24). He also mentions the creation of humanity: “From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth” (17:26). A similar reference to creation occurs in Acts 14. When the people of Lystra want to honor Paul and Barnabas as gods, the latter object, saying, “We are mortals just like you and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them” (14:15). The latter part of the sentence seems to be an implicit quote from Exod 20:11 and/or Ps 146:6, almost identical to the same expression used in community worship in Acts 4:24.

⁵² Something similar happens with respect to the speech of Paul on the Areopagus in Acts 17, where Greek traditions (cf. 17:28; the quote seems to come from Aratus, *Phaenomena* 5) are taken over and enveloped by a Jewish overlay (particularly a Hellenistic-Jewish anti-idolatry polemic). See further Claire Clivaz, “L’Analyse narrative signale-t-elle l’arrivée du *Muthos* en exégèse? Histoire et poétique autour d’Ac 17,28,” in *Analyse Narrative et Bible: Deuxième Colloque International du RRENAB*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Avril 2004 (ed. C. Focant and A. Wéenin; BETL 191; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 483–95. The other reference to a Greek source occurs in Paul’s speech before Agrippa in Acts 26:14, where the expression “It hurts you to kick against the goads” is found, which seems to be based on a traditional Greek proverb found in variations from Pindar (*Pythians* 2.94–96) to Euripides (*Bacchae* 795).

⁵³ Scholars examining the role of prediction in Hellenistic historiography have suggested that Luke here confirms his narrative telling of events using citations from Scripture. As Clare K. Rothschild suggests, “. . . the astonishing regularity with which the author of Luke-Acts predicts and fulfils events within his narrative amounts to more than a common literary or theological motif. . . . It reflects the proclivity by

Passages such as Acts 15:13–21, in which James deploys a prophetic text (referring to David; Amos 9:11–12) to argue for Gentile inclusion in the community, provide further evidence of this rhetorical strategy. As a result, both the leaders and the communities they represent appear in continuity with the past, not disconnected from it. But the cultural implications thereof are at least as if not more important. The way in which Luke creates fulfillment expectations with his readers appears as a rhetorical device, yet, rather than simply presenting a traditional fulfillment of the hopes and expectations of the past, we see something more complex emerge, wherein the past lends something of its “authentic” aura to the “present” situation that is unfolding—the legitimacy of the revered and respected “ancient” stories are now used to circumscribe textually the emergent Christian community. This script is rather powerful in Luke’s eastern imperial setting. Here again religious themes and motifs are conscripted into generating an *ethos* for the apostles in the narrative, the community they represent and, finally, the writer who gives us this narrative in the first place. The sacred texture of textual precedents thus shores up and secures the performance of the apostles in the narrative—their ideal masculine comportment is thus quite literally script(ur)ed into existence. It is a form of masculinity that is constructed as a “God-given” mandate within the space of this ancient Jewish tradition.

Thus, for instance, the citation of Joel 2:28–32 in Acts 2 is altered to reflect its explicit “fulfillment” in this “end of day” messianic movement in Jerusalem.⁵⁴ In light of this textual redeployment, the production of Christian identity is also a form of reenactment as the present glory is enhanced by the re-staging and in some sense

historians of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods to provide unassailable defense of their account within their own narrative” (*Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History* [WUNT 2.175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], 183). Cf. John T. Squires’s comment, wherein he notes that “fulfilled prophecies reveal the divine will,” thus marking the rhetorical effect of Scripture citation in Acts (*The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* [SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 146). Also see Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 184–86.

⁵⁴ Cf. Acts 2:18, where the text from Joel is augmented with the addition of “and they shall prophesy,” which serves to provide confirmation/legitimation for the prior *narrative* that relates the event of “speaking in tongues” (2:4). Thus, the alteration of the text has the function of heightening its presentness to the “moment” Luke here records.

up-staging of the past. The so-called “biblicisms” of Lukan language, then, “remind” the attentive reader—and create the expectation—that this story “runs in continuity with that of Israel in the past,”⁵⁵ but they also textually inscribe this story now unfolding. The patterned archaisms arrest the reader’s attention; as such, they represent highly persuasive discursive practices that intensify the moment of origins that Luke is here relating. With respect to the use of Joel in Acts 2 specifically, Robert Brawley has suggested that “God’s performance dominates.”⁵⁶ Our analysis, however, might suggest an altered formulation: God is made to dominate through Luke’s deft use of Scripture. The authoritative text of the prophet Joel is used precisely to demonstrate the potency that adheres to this movement that is instigated by the “hand of God” in the opening chapters of Acts. The *ethos* constructed herein relates to those who are appointed as his emissaries in this text, not unlike, one might add, Aristides’ use of famous cultural and philosophical heroes from the Greek past in the production of his own Hellenic identity.

In the end, perhaps the reason behind such Christian appropriations of Jewish epic/myth is not all that different from renderings of former mythologies in Augustan representations. Clearly such images offer some form of legitimacy, not in small part because they represent or reflect recognized cultural codes and as such they embody authority and resonate with cultural power (and male privilege). Such practices of representation are discursively powerful “cloaks” in which to be clothed and out of which to “act.” They are archetypal representations that carry an immediacy of meaning regarding imperial worth and cultural sanction.⁵⁷ Viewed in this light, it is not so much that the Roman Empire has just now come on the scene—

⁵⁵ Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 93.

⁵⁶ Robert L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 86.

⁵⁷ The Roman obsession with mythical reenactments has been well-rehearsed in other contexts, but it bears repeating here largely in terms of its connection with visual spectacle more generally, which quite readily found itself adapted to narrative form. See our summary and discussion in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Bodies and the Technology of Power: Reading *The Gospel of Peter* under Empire,” in *Das Petrus-evangelium als Teil spätantiker Literatur* (ed. T. Nicklas and T. J. Kraus; GCS; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 343–62. Also see Chris Frilingos’s essay in this volume.

rather, it has always in some sense been here (or there). This is in fact the colonial nature of narrative cooption. And Luke's use of the Hebrew Bible fits right at home in this environment.⁵⁸

SPACE AND TERRITORY IN ACTS

If the appropriation of time in Acts is predominantly Jewish, using its past but with a universal(istic) turn to the Gentiles, a similar move can be noted with respect to the appropriation of space throughout Acts, as the narrative moves from a predominantly Jewish space to a public forum dominated by Gentiles. This movement is outlined at the very beginning of Acts, where it is Jesus himself who tells his disciples "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (1:8) A comparison with the trajectory in Acts shows that all places outside of Judea and Samaria, be it Asia Minor, Greece or Rome, are subsumed under this designation "the ends of the earth," thus reflecting a perspective from the more peripheral regions of the *Roman Empire*. From this vantage point, Rome does not appear as the center, but rather as the outer reaches of the earth. As a result, the movement described in Acts is a reversal of the imperialist expansion from Rome to the colonies. This reversal, however, is predicated on that very same dynamic, in so far as the colonial gaze is returned but also reflected by the

⁵⁸ Although space does not permit a detailed analysis of the larger shift in reading Scripture in Acts that we are suggesting here, it is worth noting that too often the use of the Hebrew Bible in Acts is read as a deeply theological practice, one which is formative in the construction of Luke's own theological agenda. The scholarship on the theological import of the Old Testament for Luke is immense, but see the following sample of studies: Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*; Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lucan Christology* (JSNTSup 110; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002); and, most recently, Bart J. Koet, "Isaiah in Luke-Acts," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken; The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel; New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 79–100; and Kenneth Duncan Litwack, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually* (JSNTSup 282; New York: T&T Clark International, 2005). In contrast, Dietrich Rusam, *Das Alte Testament bei Lukas* (BZNW 112; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), has argued for a more nuanced understanding of the use of "Scripture" in Acts based on a comparison of how respective traditions were used by other ancient historians.

colonized “other.” Simultaneously, the movement described in Acts starts in Jerusalem, with the temple as its most important sacred and symbolic center, and ends in Rome, the heart of imperial power. As with Pausanias, but especially with Aristides, travel and spatial movement serve in part to dislocate the imperial centers of power. Moreover, as in these other two writers, so also in Acts, religious centers and numinous displays of power become a mode of self-identifying performance that locates authority and power within the colonial subject and outside of the traditional *loci* of control.⁵⁹

It is remarkable, moreover, that in the first chapters of Acts the Romans are completely absent. Conflicts are rather located within the Jewish community, between the disciples (Peter and John in Acts 4; the apostles in Acts 5 and Stephen in Acts 7) on the one hand and Jewish authority figures on the other. This situation is quite different from the one later in Acts, where Paul is arrested by a Roman tribune in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 21:33). Roman military presence is further foregrounded in the chapters that follow (22–23), where Paul is put in prison and later brought to Caesarea by an impressive Roman escort in order to appear before Felix.⁶⁰ In between these two episodes in Jerusalem, at the beginning and end of Acts, a shift takes place. The apostles are gradually replaced as central characters by Paul, with Jerusalem receding into the background. Places outside of Judea, visited by Paul and his companions, now also take center stage. Simultaneously, the temple as a place of apostolic performance is replaced (initially at least) by the synagogue, a symbol of Jewish presence in the Diaspora, where Paul enacts the first stages of his mission beyond Palestine.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See further Todd Penner, “*Res Gestae Divi Christi*: Miracles, Early Christian Heroes, and the Discourse of Power in Acts,” in *The Role of Miracle Discourse in the Argumentation of the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; SBLSymS; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, forthcoming).

⁶⁰ Also see Tat-siong Benny Liew, “Acts,” in *Global Bible Commentary* (ed. D. Patte et al.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 419–28: “As Acts progresses, one finds more and more references to both the presence and the power of Rome (16:12; 18:1–2; 19:35–41). More specifically, both Paul and Paul’s opponents have to work through Roman power to achieve their respective ends (16:16–22, 35–40; 17:5–8; 18:12–17; 21:31–32; 23:10; 24:2–3, 10; 25:10–12)” (426).

⁶¹ They appear earlier in Acts 9:2, when Paul asks the high priest for letters to the synagogues at Damascus. There are also “rival” synagogues mentioned in 6:9, but these appear to function differently for Luke (see Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 289–90 n. 68).

This movement away from the center is also repeated on a micro level in Acts. For instance, Paul starts preaching in the local synagogue, but, when he encounters resistance and opposition from the Jewish community, he moves into the public forum to address Gentiles instead. In Ephesus, for example, Paul exchanges the synagogue for the lecture hall of Tyrannus and, as a result, “all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord” (19:10). Similarly, in Iconium both Jews and Greeks became believers (14:1). The presence of Greeks in Asia Minor, noted here, and of Romans in Greece (e.g., 18:12), reflects both the colonial (Greek) past and (Roman) imperial present. Philippi, for instance, is called “a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony” (16:11).⁶² Corinth was also a Roman colonial city and, together with cities like Ephesus (the noted center of power for the Roman provincial region of Asia)⁶³ and Athens (the cultural importance of which goes without saying), it lends an aura of authenticity to the landscape of significant cultural and political interaction that Luke creates for Paul.⁶⁴ The resultant picture, as Jerome Neyrey points out, is one of Paul “as an urban person, who, while he may travel through the country side (16:1–7), lodges in cities and deals with all the levels of the ancient stratified city, especially the elites.”⁶⁵ Thus, in much the same way as we see it operative in Aristides’ *The Sacred Tales*, the territorial remapping that occupies Luke also entails the inscription of a particular elite social status, especially through associations with religious locations (primarily temples of Asclepius in Aristides and

⁶² For further discussion of Philippi’s status as a colonial city, see the incisive treatment by Joseph A. Marchal, “Military Images in Philippians 1–2: Feminist Analysis of the Rhetorics of Scholarship, Philippians, and Current Contexts,” in *Her Master’s Tools? Feminist and Post-Colonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse* (ed. C. Vander Stichele and T. Penner; SBL Global Perspectives on the Bible 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 265–86.

⁶³ See Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 167. Cf. Jerome Neyrey, “Luke’s Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts,” in Witherington, *History, Literature and Society*, 251–79 (273–74).

⁶⁴ In this vein, Tarsus, Paul’s city of origin, was also an honorable place in terms of imperial favor. See Neyrey, “Luke’s Social Location of Paul,” 271. He also points out the importance of Antioch as the capital of Roman Syria (272).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 256. Lydia as elite “pagan” female could be included here as well; see further the illuminating analysis by Shelly Matthews, *First Converts: Rich Pagan Women and the Rhetoric of Mission in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

the temple of Jerusalem and synagogues in Acts) and political social spaces (the city and its elite rulers in both Aristides and Acts). Spaces have the power to both construct and reify social identity and it is interesting in this light that, while both Pausanias and Aristides choose to develop cultural and political themes through the context of primarily religious sites, in Acts Paul expounds religious and cultural themes in public/civic locations. This kind of spatial remapping of the *polis* landscape reveals both an apostolic contest for public space and an attempt (presumably) to dislocate other male elite intermediaries within the current webs of power relations.

In the same way, as he travels through the Roman Empire, Paul also meets its local representatives, such as the proconsul Sergius Paulus (13:7) in Paphos and Gallio in Corinth (18:12). Empire is clearly everywhere to impose law and order and Paul himself invokes his Roman citizenship several times when he falls into trouble.⁶⁶ Thus, far from resisting and resenting Roman presence, Paul seems perfectly at ease in this environment. A similar picture also emerges in the trial narratives at the end of Acts where Paul defends his case before the governor, first Felix, then Festus, and finally before king Agrippa. Indeed, Paul appears rather self-confident when appealing to the emperor as the final authority to decide his case (25:10, 12). At the end of Acts, we thus find Paul preaching in Rome, the center of imperial power itself. Here, as is the case earlier in Acts, he first meets with Jews, only this time the roles are reversed: he does not go out to see them in a synagogue, but rather invites them, more specifically the Jewish leaders, to his place of house arrest (28:17). The response, however, is mixed and the outcome is the same as earlier in Acts. The last words we hear from Paul in Luke's narrative consist of a quote from Isa 6:9–10 [LXX] and the declaration that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. But it does not necessarily matter that Paul quotes this passage as opposed to another; what matters, rather, is that he quotes *authoritative* texts, for in this way he himself becomes authoritative.⁶⁷ That is, the recog-

⁶⁶ On the likelihood of Paul's status as a Roman citizen, see John Clayton Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul* (SNTSMS 77; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43–51.

⁶⁷ Also see Bill T. Arnold, who argues that, in the case of quotations introduced with introductory formulae, "the speaker has appealed to the Old Testament as an authoritative source to validate and substantiate his position" ("Luke's Characterizing

nized authority embodied in this prophetic Isaianic text for his Jewish audience characterizes Paul as one who not only draws on these traditions, but as one who in many respects embodies the respect and honor these traditions “inherently” possess.⁶⁸ And this seems to be representative of Luke’s narrative strategy in general: the Jewish scriptural tradition proves useful for negotiating the complex webs of power, working well in tandem with depictions of upward social movement within and of outward geographical expansion toward the main cities of the empire.

MASCULINE PERFORMANCE IN ACTION

As already hinted at in the previous section, critically important for constructing social and cultural identity in Acts is the *transmuted* (and *transvalued*) *authority* of the past story itself. It is therefore hardly accidental that Luke refers to texts that carry great weight in Jewish tradition. Moses and the Prophets are cited by the new “founders” and patriarchs and kings are recalled by those who appear as leaders in the community.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, then, only forefathers are mentioned by name. This is all the more striking since most references come from textual bodies (and contexts) in which women like Sarah,

Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Acts,” in Witherington, *History, Literature and Society*, 300–23 [309]).

⁶⁸ Moreover, in quoting this text, Paul also follows in the footsteps of Jesus. Cf. Luke 8:10; the closest parallel, however, is the Matthean version in Matt 13:14–15.

⁶⁹ It is important to bear in mind that some texts, such as the selection of the “Seven” in Acts 6:1–6, in fact seem—in terms of literary compositional features—to be based on earlier “stories” such as those found in Exod 18:13–26, Num 11 and Deut 1. Here we see a coalescence of stories related to Moses and his “commanders” replicated in the formation of the early Christian community on display in Acts (see further Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 266–67). A similar type of rhetorical appropriation is noted by Dennis R. MacDonald in the parallels between Acts and Homer or Vergil (see, for example, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003]; cf. Palmer Bonz, *Past as Legacy*). Also see Milton Moreland, “The Jerusalem Community in Acts: Mythmaking and the Socio-Rhetorical Functions of a Lukan Setting,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 285–310. One should also bear in mind that such parallels do not necessarily reflect Luke’s “authorial” intention, as the mimetic spirit of composition would allow for unconscious influence (and then, of course, ancient readers would have made their own connections as well). As Green notes, “[t]he issue, rather, is whether the narrative of Luke-Acts, understood within its own world of presuppositions, supports the identification of parallelisms” (“Internal Repetition,” 296).

Rebecca or Bathsheba play a significant role as well. However, the only woman from the past mentioned (and then only in passing) is the daughter of Pharaoh in Acts 7:21, yet not for her own sake, but because of the role she plays in adopting Moses.⁷⁰ The past thus recalled and affirmed is one dominated by male authority figures. This feature, of course, reveals more about Luke's own agenda as he is the one "behind" the speeches in Acts, determining the particular role they fulfill in his narrative.⁷¹ The narrative argument of "re-enactment" that is on display rests on the already validated and legitimated stories of the past, investing the present "scene" with precisely that prestige embodied in the recreation of the earlier/originary moment. The underlying story can thus be identified as a cultural figuration that shores up the authority and staged performance of the Christian community in/of Acts.⁷² Pausanias's account fits into this paradigm well, as does Aristides' overt focus on male authority figures of the past. Indeed, the list of characters upon which they all draw are those associated with cultural, political and religious achievement—those that embody the virtue and piety of the *polis*. The Hebrew biblical characters function in a similar way; it is their status as exemplars of piety and virtue that makes them such readily adaptable tropes of identity.

Also worth noting in this respect is the crucial connection between the appropriation of story and geographical expansion. In almost all of these narratives in Acts, a critical component related to space comes into play, particularly in terms of expansion and movement from one place to another. As in Pausanias, a connection can be noticed here between territory and the inscription of ancient story, as the speeches in Acts in which the past is recalled are linked to particular characters and places. Peter (Acts 2 and 3), Stephen (7) and James (15) are the ones who deliver such speeches for a Jewish

⁷⁰ See further Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, "'All the World's a Stage': The Rhetoric of Gender in Acts," in *Luke and His Readers: Festschrift A. Denaux* (ed. R. Bieringer, G. Van Belle and J. Verheyden; BETL 182; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 373–96.

⁷¹ See further Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 208–15.

⁷² We have traced this feature elsewhere; see Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, "Gendering Violence: Patterns of Power and Constructs of Masculinity in the Acts of the Apostles," in *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (ed. A.-J. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; FCNTECW 9; New York: T&T Clark International and Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004), 193–209.

audience in Jerusalem. Outside Judea, a mixed audience consisting of Israelites and Godfearers is addressed by Paul in the synagogue of Antioch (13) and Paul convenes a Jewish audience in Rome (28). In these particular cases the past is employed at decisive narrative turning points, which correspond to geographical advancement and placement.⁷³ The act of citation is critical here for showing the “great men” of Acts in action. The forward expansion is in the hands of these male authority figures who, as authorized from the beginning by Jesus himself (Acts 1), speak well and act in a commanding manner. The performance of these men is, moreover, script(ur)ed, as their public comportment is grounded in both a historical but also divine necessity: they act out the *parrhēsia* of the prophets, the *charisma* and *self-mastery* of Moses, the piety of Abraham, the authority of David and so on. Thus, while there is competition for colonial positioning, there is also a displacement of the dominant *polis* ideology through an explicit by-passing of the invocation of its heroic past. These are *older men* on the scene—and *better men* for being that.

By reinforcing this particular take on the content matter in Acts, Luke curtails his speeches to “resonate” with the narrative audiences, thus showing his speakers to be good orators and statesmen capable of elucidating a specific reaction (positive, negative or ambivalent) from the auditors. Also notable is the shifting nature of Luke’s interest in using scriptural stories; they are predominant in the early chapters of Acts for a Jewish audience, but fade to the background when Gentile audiences emerge. The fact that it does not seem critically important to Luke that stories from Scripture be used on these other occasions is remarkable, especially when compared with the evidence from Paul’s letters, where Paul seems quite willing to articulate his formulations for both Jew *and* Gentile audience(s) on the basis of

⁷³ In some cases a connection may be present between the selection of particular stories and the geographical positioning that is employed in the text. This may be the case, for instance, with the recitation of biblical history in Acts 7—the “selected” and “reconfigured” biblical history has a decided diasporic content to it, which corresponds to Luke’s interest in the expansion of the mission to Gentiles, who dwell outside of the land (see Gregory Sterling, “‘Opening the Scriptures’: The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and the Early Christian Mission,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy* [ed. D. P. Moessner; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1999], 199–225). Overall, then, it seems that the use of the texts in question has the greater purpose of lending some kind of aura of authenticity to the expansion taking place.

scriptural argumentation—and it appears critical for him to do so.⁷⁴ While Paul in his letters presumes at least some familiarity with the biblical stories, in Acts we find that Paul's interaction is relatively Scripture-less. This is illuminating, in a way, because it demonstrates that Luke is invested in creating *ideal* constructs of interaction and engagement; the audience and occasion thus determine what material is used.⁷⁵ We should also bear in mind, however, that the Jewish audience may also provide a "safe" space for Luke in which to construct and articulate a particular early Christian public identity much like the dreams of Aristides and Pausanias's ancient past provide secure locations for engaging the *imperium* of the Romans.

In the final analysis, then, not only does Paul embody a particular cultural authority as the "wandering" but publicly visible apostle⁷⁶ who meets up with, is interrogated by or is even in a position to summon other cultural and political authorities, but he also espouses a *logos* that matches his *ergon*.⁷⁷ In a similar way to Aristides acting (out) like Demosthenes, Sophocles and Plato or like Pausanias drawing on the traditions of Aratus or Antigonos, Paul here too engages in mimetic self-identifying practices and performances.⁷⁸ In the pro-

⁷⁴ Cf. the observations by Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*, 37–45, where she notes that for early Christians generally "the Scriptures are the assumed starting point" (37). For the complexity of Paul's "own" rhetorical use of Scripture, see Christopher D. Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004).

⁷⁵ On this critical feature of historiographical (and rhetorical) composition, see Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 146–79.

⁷⁶ On the connection here between the role of the ancient philosopher and the public life of the apostle, see Loveday Alexander, "'Foolishness to the Greeks': Jews and Christians in the Public Life of the Empire," in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 229–49 (esp. 243–49). For the comparison between Paul and Osiris as wandering "Kulturbringers," see Doron Mendels, "Pagan or Jewish?: The Presentation of Paul's Mission in the Book of Acts," in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag, I. Judentum* (ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger and P. Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 431–52.

⁷⁷ As Neyrey notes, "as a typical male of considerable social status . . . [Paul] regularly appears in public space; he frequently performs traditional elite male tasks such as arguing, debating and speaking boldly in public. Luke would have us think of him as a person at home in places reserved for elites." ("Luke's Social Location of Paul," 275–76). Also see Lentz, who stresses the high social standing of Paul depicted throughout Acts (*Luke's Portrait of Paul*).

⁷⁸ One might think here of other instances too (ones which draw on the Greek and Roman tradition more explicitly), such as the story in Acts 14, with the possible play on the well-known narrative relating the appearance of Zeus and Hermes (in disguise) to Baucis and Philemon. More recently, Amy L. Wordelman has made

cess, the male elites of empire assume the authoritative and pious identities of the various heroes and gods that vivify these narrative landscapes.

JESUS AS KING(DOM)

In light of these and earlier observations, a final intriguing point of entry into the larger cultural dynamics we have been exploring in this essay is the comparison between Jesus and David in Acts 2, where Peter launches into a speech to the crowd, which has just witnessed the divine manifestation of numinous power (i.e., speaking in multiple foreign languages) in their midst. Immediately following the citation from Joel 3:1–5 (LXX) in Acts 2:17–21, Peter outlines the story of Jesus (2:22–24) in general, how he was handed over and killed and then resurrected from the dead. He then goes on to cite Ps 15:8–11 (LXX) to demonstrate that Jesus' triumph over death was predicted by David himself: "For David says concerning him . . ." (2:25). In the following context Peter further compares "our ancestor David" (2:29) with Jesus. Using different Psalms (most explicitly 110:1 [LXX] in 2:35) to show that Jesus is in fact the one to whom David was referring, Peter concludes with "Therefore, let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (2:36). Important to the argument developed above is how a famous figure from the past is invoked to authorize Peter's argument and how the titular designations of "Messiah" (χριστός) and "Lord" (κύριος) become coordinates for pinpointing the significance of this character Jesus.⁷⁹ Moreover,

a compelling case for viewing the intertextual story in question as the tale in Ovid relating the visit of Zeus to Lycaon (*Metam.* 1.163–240), who fails to recognize the god, tests him and is subsequently punished by being turned into a wolf ("Cultural Divides and Dual Realities," in Penner and Vander Stichele, *Contextualizing Acts*, 205–32). In a similar way, Paul can be seen to play the role of Socrates in Acts 17 (see esp. Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric: Ambiguity, Cunning, and Deception in Greece and Rome* [ESEC 7; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2001], 39–82; and David M. Reis, "The Areopagus as Echo Chamber: *Mimesis* and Intertextuality in Acts 17," *Journal of Higher Criticism* 9 [2002]: 259–77; for a similar phenomenon in Dio Chrysostom's *Oration* 13, where Chrysostom implicitly constructs his identity in light of Socrates in much the same way that Luke does it here for Paul, see Tim Whitmarsh, "'Greece is the World': Exile and Identity in the Second Sophistic," in Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome*, 269–305 [289–90]).

⁷⁹ Palmer Bonz argues that Luke may also have been influenced here by similar

David, who, in his capacity as “prophet” (v. 30), knew that one of his descendants would be put on his throne, in this context serves as a mechanism for charging the speech of Peter and the character of Jesus with *royal* authority. As a result, Peter emerges as the intermediary of these divinely ordained (and anointed) representatives of God.

The same argument concerning the resurrection, to the identical end, is used by Paul when he addresses the audience at the synagogue of Antioch (Acts 13:16–39). Here, however, David is not identified as the author of the Psalms (Pss 2:7; 16:10 [combined with Isa 55:3]), but explicitly called “king” (13:22), one of whose descendants is the “savior Jesus” (σωτήρα Ἰησοῦν; 13:23). The reoccurrence of this Davidic motif in Acts 15, where the “fallen tent of David” (15:16; cf. Amos 9:11 [LXX]) is understood to be restored in the community decision to include Gentiles, is striking. In a consistent strategy of narrative invocation, the Davidic theme returns to accent the expansion of the kingdom in Acts. Overall, then, we notice that for Luke the Davidic legacy seems most appropriate for describing Jesus and the community that represents him,⁸⁰ but the larger story of David—its tragedy, its pathos—is missing from Acts. In fact, there is little about David other than that he died and was buried (2:29; 13:36; cf. 7:45–46). Rather, it is what David denotes and signifies—what he implicitly contributes to the narrative argumentation—that is so critical for Luke.

The particular context in which Jesus’ royal credentials are mentioned, however, may also throw some additional light on Luke’s agenda. It is only for a Jewish audience that the apostles refer to Jesus’ royal status. The only time Jesus is called “king” for a Gentile

claims made by Vergil concerning Augustus’s relationship to Aeneas and Hercules (*Past as Legacy*, 112 n. 99).

⁸⁰ The Davidic credentials of Jesus are also noted in Luke 1, where Joseph is identified as being “of the house of David” (1:27; also see the genealogy in Luke 3:23–38). This is “confirmed” by Gabriel, who tells Mary that “the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David” (1:32), and by Zechariah, who prophesies that God has “raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David” (1:69). In 2:4 Joseph goes to Bethlehem, identified as the city of David, “because he was descended from the house and family of David” (ἐξ οἴκου καὶ πατριᾶς Δαυίδ). However, as Paul W. Walaskay notes, “while Luke styles the annunciation, birth, and response to the coming of Jesus after the Old Testament, the *imperium* provides the backdrop against which these events take place” (*And So We Came to Rome: The Political Perspective of St. Luke* [SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983], 25). Nevertheless, this juxtaposition creates a subtle yet perceptible contrast between the two powers—Jewish, Roman—in Luke-Acts.

audience is in 17:7, where the Jewish opponents try to discredit Paul and Silas, claiming that “they are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” The language used here suggests that this Jesus and the community of his disciples present a potential threat to the established power of empire. However, given the malicious intent of the opponents, this idea is simultaneously dismissed by Luke as slander. The subversive potential of the Davidic claims does not appear elsewhere in Acts. Rather, in Acts 25 and 26, it is Agrippa who is called “king” by Luke and addressed as such by Paul in his defense. Paul thus appears as someone who accepts Roman presence as a fact and a necessity when it comes to law and order.⁸¹ Also, in his defense before Festus, Paul explicitly denies having done anything offensive against the emperor (25:8) and even appeals to the emperor as the final authority to decide his case (25:10–11). Moreover, in the trial narratives, Paul shifts the focus away from any suggestions of insurrection and instead insists on the resurrection (of the dead) as a major matter of (internal) dissent. In his defense before Felix, Paul refers to the resurrection twice without even mentioning Jesus, stating that “it is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today” (24:21; cf. v. 15).⁸² Although in his next trial, before Festus, Paul similarly does not mention Jesus, Festus reports to Agrippa that Paul’s accusers had “certain points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted to be alive” (25:19). Here again, the resurrection is singled out as the main issue. This is also the case in his defense before Agrippa, where Paul mentions the resurrection twice, once in general (26:8) and once specifically related to the Messiah (ὁ χριστός; 26:23).⁸³ With this insistence on the resurrection, Luke

⁸¹ As Richard J. Cassidy observes, “in marked contrast with the Jesus of Luke’s Gospel, the Paul of Acts is always ready to explain himself when asked to do so by a Roman official” (*Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1987], 119).

⁸² Only later, when he meets Felix with Drusilla (Felix’s Jewish wife), is Paul said to talk about faith in Christ Jesus, justice, self-control and the coming judgment (24:24–25). According to Neyrey, these topics (i.e. justice, self-control and future judgment) were hotly debated by the major philosophical schools of the Stoics and Epicureans, thereby placing Paul’s discourse within the context of an esteemed Greek past yet again (“Luke’s Social Location of Paul,” 262; cf. Walaskay, *And so we came to Rome*, 56, who rather observes “Senecan echos”).

⁸³ This is, moreover, one of the few places where the term χριστός is used in

foregrounds the religious charges against Paul rather than the more serious and potentially dangerous political ones.⁸⁴

A similar shift seems to take place when we look at the claim that Jesus is “the Lord.” In the trial narratives Jesus is only called “lord” twice (both in 26:15), when Paul recalls the incident on the road to Damascus.⁸⁵ The resultant picture is that Christological titles, such as “Messiah,” “Lord” and “Savior,” are largely absent in speeches before Gentile audiences in general and in the trial scenes in particular. These titles are used almost exclusively by the apostles in their speeches for Jewish audiences.⁸⁶ This strategy once again shows how the speeches in Acts portray their speakers as skillfully addressing the occasion and audience in question but also showing an awareness of the politically dangerous nature of their emergent discourse. The constrained nature of the speeches to a Gentile audience may also reveal something of the negotiation and cooption that an elite male in the eastern empire “experienced.”⁸⁷ Still, there is another thread to this as well, in so far as the one who maintains rhetorical

the final part of Acts. After chapter 18, the term only occurs three other times: in 24:24 (Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), 26:23 and in 28:31, the closing verse of Acts (κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός).

⁸⁴ Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 156. Cassidy similarly notes that turbulence and disorder were more of a concern to the Romans than internal controversy within a Jewish community (*Society and Politics*, 121).

⁸⁵ He states: “I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’” These words are largely identical to the recounting of the same incident in 9:5 and 22:8. In Acts 24–28, the designation “Lord” is only used for Jesus once more (in 28:31). Noteworthy in this respect is that in 25:26 Festus uses the term κύριος to refer to the emperor.

⁸⁶ An exception is the speech of Peter before Cornelius with his relatives and friends, a clearly sympathetic Gentile audience, where he calls Jesus Christ “Lord of all” (10:36). The term σωτήρ is only used in Acts 5:31, by the apostles before the council (where Jesus is referred to as ἀρχηγός [cf. 3:15] and σωτήρ), and in 13:23, by Paul in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia. See also the announcement of the angel in Luke 2:11, where all three titles (Savior, Lord, Messiah) are used in combination with the Davidic motifs.

⁸⁷ As we have argued elsewhere (“Gendering Violence”), Luke appears to have at the very least an ambivalent if not also a disparaging view of Roman authority and colonial control. The Alexandrian text of the Acts of the Apostles seems to encourage this view. But, as Heike Omerzu observes, the Western textual tradition tends to present the Romans in a more favorable light: “Die Untersuchung der ‘westlichen’ Überlieferung bekräftigt letztere Einwände insofern, als hier ein weitaus positiveres Bild der römischen Behörden gezeichnet wird als in der Vorlage” (“Die Darstellung der Römer in der Textüberlieferung der Apostelgeschichte,” in *The Book of Acts as Church History: Text, Textual Traditions and Ancient Interpretation* [ed. T. Nicklas and M. Tilly; BZNW 120; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003], 147–81 [181]).

control over and proper comportment at the proceedings is rather Paul, “a man of such status and prestige that he could presume to influence the governor and arrange for his case to be heard by Nero in Rome.”⁸⁸ Even more important than Paul’s status, however, is the fact that the events, as they unfold in Acts and in which the Romans have their part to play, are ultimately under supreme divine control.⁸⁹ Already in Acts 9, Paul appears as chosen to testify in Rome and this is repeated in 23:11 and 27:24: “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar.” Thus both the past evoked and the future course of unfolding events (predicted and “fulfilled” in Acts) demonstrate that for Luke the “true” powerbrokers are not the Roman authorities who represent their emperor, but rather the leaders of the emerging Christian communities who, as heralds of another kingdom, represent their Lord to come.

In the end, however, one cannot fail to notice that even if the Davidic themes are largely limited to the Jewish sections of Acts this does not thereby mitigate their implicit (if not explicit) culturally and politically subversive agenda. As with Pausanias and Aristides, even “safe” spaces in the narrative can also function as sites of resistance. Still, “resistance” in this context explicitly entails similar colonial and imperial aspirations, seeking to better one’s position in the social (and here also cultural) hierarchy of empire. Thus, these images of potent male powerbrokers dotting (and darting across) the Lukan landscape, being marked also as resistant colonial subjects who proffer a new royal ideology, both challenge the current configurations of power but in that same moment also reify those same structures by valuing the dynamics and aspiring to the aims of *imperium* itself. Further, this royal ideology, fueled by the retrieval of Davidic images of the past Jewish *mythos*, reconstitutes in this image of the early

⁸⁸ Lentz, *Luke’s Portrait of Paul*, 170.

⁸⁹ Indeed, as Walaskay notes, “Augustus had a part to play in God’s plan for salvation. His edict set the plan in motion, Jesus the Messiah was born appropriately in Bethlehem, and the angels sang the doxology that the *pax Augusta* was completed (complemented) by the *pax Christi*” (*And so we came to Rome*, 27). Also see the ground-breaking work by Allen Brent on the relationship of the Gospel of Luke to the imperial cult of the emperors: *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (VCSup 45; Leiden: Brill, 1999); and idem, “Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor,” *JTS* 48 (1997): 111–38; as well as the work of Gilbert cited in n. 14 above.

Christian community the masculine horizons of the webs of power operative in the first century Mediterranean world, script(ur)ing performance in an ontology of historical necessity and divine mandate. As Marianne Palmer Bonz argues, Luke “decided to recast his community’s sacred traditions in a style and manner that would make the Christian claim a powerful and appealing alternative to the ubiquitous and potentially seductive salvation claims of imperial Rome.”⁹⁰ Indeed, but as the Davidic focus—with Jesus as his descendant—makes palpably clear, the succession in early Christianity that Luke is broadly constructing will be precisely that: a male lineage of powerbrokers, as the imperial aspirations of conquering enemies (including even death itself) and expanding territory based on the notion (and right) of (kingly) power are reinscribed in the process of reclamation. It is no wonder, then, that Luke’s narrative has had such a similar seductive pull on readers through the ages and that imperial narrations of all kinds continue to hold modern readers in their grip.

⁹⁰ Palmer Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, 86.

FROM BEDROOM TO COURTROOM:
THE ADULTERY TYPE-SCENE AND
THE *ACTS OF ANDREW*

Saundra Schwartz

The end of the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew*, like the conclusion of all the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, comes as no surprise. Aegeates, the proconsul of Patras, is convinced that Andrew has corrupted his wife, Maximilla. He arrests him, leaving him to languish in prison for a long time until he suddenly remembers to bring him before the tribunal, where he renders the following summary verdict against him:

The time to complete my judgment (τὸ τέλος τῆς περὶ σε κρίσεως) against you has arrived, you stranger (ξένε ἄνθρωπε) and alien (ἀλλότριε) to this present life, and enemy (ἐχθρὲ) of my home and corrupter (λυμεὼν) of my entire house. Why did you decide to burst into places alien to you (εἰσπηδῆσαι ἀλλοτρίοις τόποις) and corrupt a wife (ὑποδι-αφθεῖραι γυναῖκα) who used to please me in every way and never slept with another man? She has convinced me that she now rejoices in you and your God. So enjoy my gifts!¹

Without allowing Andrew an opportunity to speak in his own defense, Aegeates orders the apostle to be flogged, tortured and crucified. The apostle welcomes this opportunity to imitate his teacher, Jesus Christ, by meeting a glorious death at the hands of his persecutor. His fortitude and the love he inspires in his disciples—in particular, Maximilla and Stratocles, the proconsul's brother—eventually convince even the wicked proconsul of the truth of the message of Andrew's faith. In the end, the apostle foils the proconsul's attempt to free him and defiantly expires on the cross, thereby becoming a martyr for the faith, earning for himself the narrative of which he is the hero.

¹ *Acts Andr.* 51.1. English translation is taken from Dennis R. MacDonald, trans., *The Acts of Andrew and the Acts of Andrew and Matthias in the City of the Cannibals* (SBLTT 33; Christian Apocrypha 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 393–95. Unless otherwise noted, I quote MacDonald's translation in this essay. I use Prieur's edition of the Greek text, following his section and line numbering (see Jean-Marc Prieur, ed., *Acta Andreae* [CCSA 5–6; 2 vols.; Turnhout: Brepols, 1989]).

The catalyst for this noble martyrdom is paradoxical for its sheer banality: it is a love triangle—specifically, an adulterous triangle—although, ironically, without the sex. There is perhaps no other dramatic formula that has generated more narratives in Western literature than “the unstable triangularity of adultery.”² In the *Acts of Andrew*, we can see how one early Christian narrative used the archetype of the adulterous triangle as it was articulated in Greek culture and transformed it so as to create a matrix for the reordering of both personal affective relationships, as expressed through a renunciation of sexuality, and social and political associations, as expressed in the creation of an androgynous community of believers, where men appropriate such traditionally feminine functions as nurturing and midwifery, while women assume the role of spectators to the initiation of new members into a community that exists separately from the hierarchies encoded in the imperial state.

In order to advance this agenda, it has been argued that the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, as well as other early Christian texts, drew upon the “entertaining” themes from the general culture in order to make the tenets of what was an exotic ideology more palatable (as well as intelligible) to audiences who were still at home within the cultural paradigms of the Greco-Roman world during the first centuries C.E.³ Yet it is necessary to dissect the concept of what it means to say a motif is “entertaining.” For the purposes of analyzing how a narrative keeps its audience engaged enough to continue reading or listening, perhaps the term “compelling” is more precise.⁴ Pre-existing story patterns—literary archetypes or *topoi*—offer just such efficient conduits for drawing in the reader/audience.

The application of oral-formulaic theory in the scholarship on the Homeric epics provides a model for understanding the function of formulaic narrative sequences, better known as “type-scenes.” Elizabeth Minchin has recently argued that type-scenes are more than mnemonic devices for oral poets; they are also expressions of culturally determined, but deeply embedded, cognitive structures. Indebted to insights

² Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 12.

³ This is the essential argument made by Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

⁴ It is precisely for this reason that ancient rhetorical treatises place the *narratio* before the *argumentum*.

derived from cognitive science, she uses studies of how the brain processes, organizes and retrieves memories in order to argue that type-scenes are more than tricks of oral storytellers; they reflect deep-seated assumptions about how the world operates.⁵ She calls this “scripted knowledge,” the organization of experiences into patterns of sequential units, which in turn facilitates the communication of information about the world: “Because we all have a wide range of experiences in common, we have a large number of scripts in common. It is possible, therefore, that one person can communicate with another simply by making a brief reference to a script. It is not necessary to express all its details, since both parties, it is assumed, already share this information. A speaker need only mention one key action from the scripted sequence and this so-called script-pointer activates the whole script in the mind of his or her listener.”⁶ In employing type-scenes, oral storytellers tapped into pre-established patterns of understanding experience. It is not necessary for the poet or author to catalog all of the components of the type-scene in order to evoke it. Because these scripts seem so “natural” to the members of the community in which they circulate, they serve as ready-made patterns for writers of fiction—that is, narratives whose purpose is, to varying extents, to make the reader *believe* in the plausibility of the world imaginatively constructed in the narrative. Type-scenes thus become the blueprints of a verisimilar universe.

This framework is helpful for understanding the construction of sexuality in early Christian literature, especially since the adultery motif provided one archetypal scenario that would have been instantly recognized by ancient audiences. The adultery type-scene had two parts: the cuckold’s discovery of the adulterers in the bedroom and then the subsequent exposure of the act to the judgment of the community, usually by means of a trial scene. This narrative sequence reflects a deeply ingrained formula in Greco-Roman culture for organizing sexual relationships, as can be seen in its appearance throughout classical literature.

Indeed, given the broad interest in this theme among early Christians, the adultery motif provides a further entrance into the thorny issue related to the connection of the Greek novels and the

⁵ Elizabeth Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the Iliad and the Odyssey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

early Christian apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, the latter of which have often been brought into comparison with the former given their thematic similarity.⁷ Despite their similarity, from the perspective of textual transmission the apocryphal Acts and the Greek novels could not be further apart: one is represented by multiple versions in different languages (apocryphal Acts), the other by just a few manuscripts and papyrus scraps (Greek novels). In other words, one (apocryphal Acts) can legitimately be considered a popular and amply documented tradition with continual interchange between written and oral performances, the other (Greek novels) light reading for an educated urban elite that identified with the (imagined) glories of classical Greece. On the grounds of the very different natures of textual transmission, Christine Thomas has argued that the Greek novels and the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are incomparable, suggesting instead the *Alexander Romance* as a more appropriate analog to the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.⁸ Both have at their core the life (*bios*) of an important and charismatic historical individual, a common strand around which other tales then crystallize. Thomas adapts the Russian formalists' distinction between *fabula* (chronological sequence of related events) and *suzhet* (arrangement of the events in a particular telling of the story) in order to argue that the texts of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles are not genetically linked as much as they are rearrangements of a set of material that refers to

⁷ The five major apocryphal Acts are as follows: the *Acts of Andrew*, *Acts of Peter*, *Acts of Paul*, *Acts of Thomas* and *Acts of John*. English translations are available in Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. and trans. R. McL. Wilson et al.; 2 vols.; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991–1992). The five extant Greek novels are Chariton, *Callirhoe*; Xenophon of Ephesus, *Habrocomes and Anthia* or the *Ephesiaca*; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*; and Heliodorus, *Ethiopia*. They are available in translation in Bryan P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). It is virtually impossible to posit direction of influence: did the novel originate as a Greco-Roman reaction against the “strange stories coming out of Palestine” (as argued by Glen W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* [Sather Classical Lectures 58; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994]), or did the Christian communities borrow motifs from popular literature in order to make the moral message of their texts more palatable for as wide an audience as possible (see Pervo, *Profit with Delight*)?

⁸ Christine M. Thomas, “Stories without Texts and without Authors: The Problem of Fluidity in Ancient Novelistic Texts and Early Christian Literature,” in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. R. F. Hock, J. B. Chance and J. Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 273–91.

something beyond the text.⁹ Audiences recognized these rearrangements (retellings) as referring to a stable referent in the world external to the text, namely, the figure of an apostle. Using a term from oral-formulaic theory, Thomas argues that the texts are “multi-forms”—that is, they offer variations of a narrative that typically result from multiple oral performances of a cycle or “trajectory” of stories. In other words, the texts are related on the level of the *fabula*. Since early Christian identity was shaped in large part by the circulation of different types of documents, the accumulated residue of tellings and retellings is preserved in the manuscript tradition, permitting the critic to engage in a textual archaeology of the reception and revision of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles to a degree that is extremely difficult with the Greek novels.¹⁰ Thomas’s approach does as much to shift the debate away from the search for the original, more authentic core of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, as Ben Edwin Perry’s famous theory that the novel was invented “on a Tuesday in July” did for the Greek novels.¹¹ Whereas Perry persuasively argued that each novel be viewed as a complete and coherent narrative, Thomas argues the inverse—what we call the “Acts of Peter” (and the same point can be extended to the *Acts of Andrew*) is a fortuitous agglomeration of *testimonia* for multiple retellings of stories drawn from a fluid tradition.

Where, then, is the common ground upon which it is possible to stake out a meaningful comparison of the Greek novels and the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles? Both sets of narratives do share a fundamental structural elasticity. Both are framed by a simple formula: boy meets girl and they get married or apostle spreads the word and is martyred, each of which is fleshed out by a series of episodes in which the protagonists are put to the test. This highly episodic structure gives these stories “elasticity,” to borrow Thomas’s apt term: theoretically, the narrative can be almost infinitely expanded,

⁹ This is the approach taken in Christine M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ An argument for the role of the textuality in the formation of early Christian communities may be found in Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 27–61.

¹¹ Ben E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins* (Sather Classical Lectures 37; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 175.

with each episode forming a bead on the string.¹² It is thus at the level of the individual episode that the Greek novels and the apocryphal Acts can be most fruitfully compared. Taken as a single expression of a nexus of typical motifs associated with a traditional literary archetype, it is possible to see a large number of points of contact at the level of the individual episode: travel, marvels, display speeches, shipwreck, domestic scenes, sexual threats, arrest/imprisonment and trial scenes, just to name a few. Furthermore, if we extend Thomas's application of oral-formulaic theory to the apocryphal Acts and to the Greek novels as well, then we might regard similar episodes as multiforms of an archetypal narrative pattern or type-scene. The individual authors then either adhere to the convention or they deliberately and playfully subvert the reader's expectations about how the scene is to unfold.

The typical scene of adultery was instantly recognizable to ancient audiences. A man bursts into a darkened bedroom to discover his wife in bed with another man. Here it is futile to search for the precise origins of this motif; judging by its appearance in a range of ancient narratives, however, it is clear that its grammar was emblazoned in the consciousnesses of audiences in the ancient world. In what follows, then, I shall establish the contours and flesh out the details of the type-scene, beginning with one example from Homer's *Odyssey* and then using that template to detect where, how and why that type-scene comes to be evoked in two Greek novels and in the *Acts of Andrew*. Finally, this particular type-scene not only titillated audiences with its quotient of sex and violence, but moreover it dramatized a set of power dynamics that were ideologically charged in the context of changing social mores in the Roman Empire. The contrast with the Greek novels will thus help to illuminate the socially provocative place of the adultery scene in the *Acts of Andrew*.

A TYPE-SCENE: THE SONG OF DEMODOCUS

Irrespective of their differing cultural registers and religious orientation, both the apocryphal Acts and the Greek novels probe the issue

¹² The metaphor is used by James A. Notopoulos, "Parataxis in Homer," *TAPA* 80 (1949): 1–23 (5–6); cf. David Konstan, "Acts of Love: A Narrative Pattern in the Apocryphal Acts," *J ECS* 6 (1998): 15–36 (34).

of sexual morality, as evidenced by the appearance of a particular formulaic scene that, for convenience, I shall call “the bedroom show-down.” It consists of a set sequence of actions, although the particular emphasis varies from narrative to narrative. The defining moment of the sequence is at that point when the husband catches his wife *in flagrante* with her lover. The formula is most immediately recognizable in the exaggerated form it often takes in comedy:

The tale generally (but not invariably) follows a predictable pattern: an account of the marriage (generally between a frisky young wife and an older, rather dim-witted husband), followed by a description of the initial meeting between the wife and the young adulterer, their bamboozling of the husband, and (often, but not always) a final confrontation in which the guilty pair are caught in the act and either punished or, just as often, afforded the opportunity for a final triumph over the all-too gullible spouse.¹³

The scenario remained a staple of comedy and mime throughout antiquity, but it was not unique to that genre. The linkage of male honor in Mediterranean cultures to female sexuality and private property fueled the scenario’s reappearance throughout different Greek and Roman periods.¹⁴ A number of specific details form a constellation that identifies a sequence of actions as part of a recognizable pattern: darkness, an informant, the husband’s absence from home, various individuals’ entrances and exits from the bedroom, secretive observation, the husband’s fury and the use (or threatened use) of a weapon. In other words, it was a scene that would have been immediately intelligible to the widest range of audiences, even if as a mere allusion. The scene does not stop at the private act, however. The revelation of the adulterers to the gaze of the community is an integral component of the paradigm itself. The bedroom showdown rarely ends in the bedroom, but rather regularly triggers a public debate. The representation of a trial, then, functions to contain the danger in the scenario by providing a narrative space in which to articulate the communal values of proper relations between husband and wife and between man and man.

¹³ John R. Porter, “Adultery by the Book: Lysias I (*On the Murder of Eratosthenes*) and Comic *Diegesis*,” *Échos du Monde Classique/Classical Views* 40, n.s. 16 (1997): 421–53 (428).

¹⁴ Elaine Fantham, “ΖΗΛΟΤΥΠΙΑ: A Brief Excursion into Sex, Violence, and Literary History,” *Phoenix* 40 (1986): 45–57.

An early and influential literary expression of the type scene appears in the eighth book of the *Odyssey* (8.266–366). It is worth delineating in some detail here in order to establish a baseline of the type. It is told in an inset narration by the bard Demodocus. At the very beginning the story-like quality of the scenario is highlighted, as Demodocus tells the story in response to a challenge to display his skill. He entertains the Phaeacian court with the story of Hephaestus's entrapment of his wife Aphrodite and her lover Ares. It begins with Helios, who is referred to as a messenger (ἄγγελός; 8.270), informing Hephaestus of his wife's affair. The cuckold's subsequent anger is repeatedly invoked throughout the episode (κεχολωμένος; 8.270; θυμαλγέα μῦθον; 8.273; χόλος ἄγριος; 8.304) and initiates the ensuing series of actions. Hephaestus devises a golden net, described in lavish detail (8.274–82), and then he leaves the house (8.283). Ares, who has been spying on Hephaestus's house (litotes: οὐδ' ἀλαοσκοπὴν εἶχε; 8.284) then approaches. Aphrodite returns home when Ares enters the house and persuades her to come with him to Hephaestus's bed (8.292–94), whereupon the net descends and they are trapped. In a reprise of the beginning, Helios, who has also been spying (οἱ σκοπὴν ἔχεν; 8.302), informs Hephaestus that the lovers have been caught in the act and in the net. Hephaestus storms back home. The scene for the confrontation has been set up; now comes the payoff as the cuckold opens his bedroom to the common view.

Hephaestus summons Zeus and the other gods to witness the trapped lovers. His speech (8.306–19) of self-righteous indignation is the centerpiece of the scene. In effect, the actions up to this point serve to set up this speech in which Hephaestus attempts to restore his honor. The other gods are drawn to the scene, but the male Olympians only: Demodocus specifies that the goddesses stayed away out of shame (αἰδώς; 8.324). The spatiality of the scene is highlighted by the reference to the male gods gathering around the doorway of the house (οἱ δ' ἀγέροντο θεοὶ ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ; 8.321). Their gaze turns the entire scene into an occasion for ridicule among men: they laugh at Hephaestus's scheme (ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνῶρτο γέλως; 8.326–27).¹⁵ Apollo and Hermes trade some adolescent quips to the effect that the chance to sleep with Aphrodite would be worth it at

¹⁵ For an analysis of the role of laughter in this scene, arguing for its connection with honor and shame, see Christopher G. Brown, "Ares, Aphrodite, and the Laughter of the Gods," *Phoenix* 43 (1989): 283–93.

twice the price (8.333–42). Poseidon, on the other hand, takes the situation more seriously and attempts to persuade Hephaestus to allow Ares to pay him. It is only after Poseidon agrees to offer security for Ares' release that Hephaestus lets him go.

Aphrodite is not an active agent in this scenario: at the level of narrative voice, the only two verbs of which she is the subject are the two intransitive words related to movement ("sat down" [ἔζεθ'; 8.290]) and "arrived at" [ἵκανε; 8.362]). It is only in her husband's speech of accusation that she is accorded agency by way of a chiasmus that uses two verbs significant for defining her relationship with men: "She dishonors me, but loves Ares" (ὥς ἐμὲ χολὸν ἔοντα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη αἰὲν ἀτιμάζει, φιλέει δ' αἰδήλον Ἄρηα; 8.308–9). She functions as an object in that she passively generates a contest between men, which in turn gives rise to a claim of one man against another. The wronged husband demands that Zeus, as the father of Aphrodite, compensate him for the bride price (ἔεδνα, ὅσσα οἱ ἐγγυάλιξα κυνώπιδος εἵνεκα κούρης; 8.318–19) that he had paid for Aphrodite, who is "pretty but not able to control her passion" (καλὴ . . . ἀτὰρ οὐκ ἐχέθυμος; 8.320).

As we see in this episode, the cognitive script used to describe an adultery scene reaches beyond the bedroom and involves the entire community. In the song of Demodocus, the conflict is extended to the threshold (and beyond) as Hephaestus summons the other gods to witness the crime. In later articulations of this script of the bedroom showdown, the courtroom performs the function of the gods standing at the bedroom door. This is where the most intimate of domestic activities, through the medium of language, is exposed to the community's judging gaze.

The pattern of "bedroom to courtroom" reappears in the literature and oratory of the fifth century B.C.E. For instance, Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* is built upon the scenario of the absent husband's return to a home that has been infiltrated by another man. In this case, the fact that the adulteress and her lover reverse the trap by ensnaring the unwitting cuckold adds to the tragic reversal of the motif and thus accelerates a cycle of vengeance, leading to anarchy not only within the household of Agamemnon, but also within the state as a whole.¹⁶ Paradoxically, the surviving Attic orations indicate that,

¹⁶ Accordingly, the trilogy of the *Oresteia* thus culminates in a trial scene that provides the foundational myth for the Areopagus, the most august lawcourt in Athens.

despite the link between private immorality and public retribution established by the cognitive template, the adulterous act *per se* was not subject to legal actions. Lysias's first oration, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*, is a trial not for adultery but for homicide.¹⁷ In a speech that later became an exemplar for students of rhetoric, the speaker (who is accused of murdering Eratosthenes) supports his claim that the killing was justifiable homicide by constructing a careful narration of the circumstances of his discovery of Eratosthenes in the speaker's home, in bed with the speaker's wife. There is the unwitting and trusting husband who is made aware of the affair by an informant. The wife's made-up appearance—i.e., her fictive beauty—is a noteworthy indicator of her secretive affair, which she is able to carry on with the complicity of a servant and with the rearrangement of sleeping spaces within the house. After the husband learns of the affair, he stages a departure from the house, so as to give an opportunity for the lover to come into the trap. The tryst happens at night. Although in such circumstances anger was considered within the cultural norms to be a mitigating factor in the use of violence, the speaker bends over backwards to establish that he had the presence of mind to summon his neighbors as witnesses before bursting into his bedroom to exercise his right to kill the seducer and thereby defend his honor.¹⁸ The fact that this speech contains all the key elements of the type-scene suggests that this "cognitive script" was well established in fifth-century Athens; the influence of this speech on later rhetorical training kept alive in readers' and listeners' minds the linkage between private sexual transgression and public rhetorical display.¹⁹

¹⁷ Gabriel Herman, "Tribal and Civic Codes of Behaviour in Lysias I," *CQ* 43 (1993): 406–19; Porter, "Adultery by the Book"; and S. C. Todd, *Lysias* (vol. 2 of *The Oratory of Classical Greece*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).

¹⁸ David Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society: The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 110–22.

¹⁹ See Kenneth J. Dover, *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum* (Sather Classical Lectures 39; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); and John R. Porter, "Nicolaus Reads Euphiletus: A Note on the Nachleben of Lysias 1," *AN* 3 (2003): 82–87. Dover discusses the publication of Lysias's speeches and uses stylistic analysis to address the question of composite authorship, which might indicate the popularity of these speeches and the extent to which they were revised and/or forged by later students of rhetoric. He indirectly addresses the influence of Lysias on later rhetorical theory, specifically Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Porter's short discussion adds Nicolaus to the list of first-century authors influenced by Lysias. It has been suggested that this is a fictional speech, but that is irrelevant for this present discussion.

THE ADULTERY TRIAL IN THE GREEK NOVELS

The script of the bedroom showdown had assumed a heightened profile in the aftermath of Augustus's moral legislation, the period when it is likely that Chariton composed what is generally agreed to be the earliest of the five complete Greek novels that have survived from antiquity.²⁰ As Karl Galinsky has argued, the impact of the Augustan law is not to be underestimated; it consumed much of Augustus's energy during his reign and "the interdependence between Rome's morals and her *imperium*" is a pervasive theme in the literature of the time.²¹ The Julian laws on adultery essentially criminalized marital infidelity by holding the cuckolded husband liable if he did not divorce his adulterous wife. Private morals became the subject of public discourse, even if Roman families (including Augustus's own) continued to behave as they wanted. In certain ways, the Greek novels reflect this shift in discourse, hence the prominence of the theme of heterosexual, reciprocal love between upper-class youths leading to legal marriage. Throughout all five of the extant novels, politics is thus displaced by sentiment.²² The ideology of the novels concerns private morality and the education of the erotic impulses of the next generation of the civic elite who would fill the ranks of the Roman imperial bureaucracy.

The apocryphal Acts and the Greek novels continue the pattern of bedroom to courtroom; yet what makes them distinctive is that the expandability of the narrative form allows for great variation in the way particular parts of the sequence are given emphasis, elaborated and in turn interrupted by other type-scenes and by embedded narration. The form of prose narrative gives the author/storyteller more flexibility in narration than the oral poet, the dramatist or the

²⁰ There are good grounds for dating Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* to sometime after Augustus; see Catherine Connors, "Chariton's Syracuse and Its Histories of Empire," in *Space in the Ancient Novel* (ed. M. Paschalis and S. Frangoulidis; ANSup 1; Groningen: Barkhuis and the University Library Groningen, 2002), 12–26.

²¹ Karl Galinsky, "Augustus' Legislation on Morals and Marriage," *Philologus* 125 (1981): 126–44 (143). See further Mary Rose D'Angelo's essay in this volume.

²² This feature was recognized by Mikhail M. Bakhtin, who noted that in the Greek romance "it is not private life that is subjected to and interpreted in light of social and political events, but rather the other way around—social and political events gain meaning in the novel only thanks to their connection with private life" ("Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* [trans. M. Holquist; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981], 84–129 [109]).

logographer. In the apocryphal Acts and the Greek novels, the discovery of an adulterous liaison—regardless of whether it is threatened, imagined or enacted—typically sets off a cascade of events that culminates in a trial scene. As the most private of social relationships—that is, illicit (as well as licit) sex between a man and a woman in the privacy of the bedroom—is exposed to the courtroom, the laser-like gaze of the judge reifies the power of the state and circumscribes the parameters of the action, intersecting with the gaze of the community of spectators, who function as proxies for the reading audience. The very purpose of this space is to provide a forum for rendering decisions on matters of life, death and the law. The representation of this process in an expanded narrative invites the reader to judge along with the judges. In this respect, the trial scene has a paideutic function. As we shall see, the Greek novels used the formula to varying effects. The examples of Chariton and Achilles Tatius will suffice to establish a template against which to gauge the complex series of events leading to Andrew's conviction and execution by Aegeates, the rejected husband of Maximilla, a newly converted Christian.

Chariton

The pattern of the bedroom showdown can be mapped onto the first trial scene in Chariton's novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe* (1.4–6), where the threatened sexual relationship belongs to the novel's leading couple, Chaereas and Callirhoe, who are married at the beginning of the story. Both are from the foremost families of Syracuse; Callirhoe is the daughter of Hermocrates, the historical statesman and general who defeated the Athenians in 413 B.C.E., and is a prominent figure in the final books of Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War.²³ Other novels place the marriage at the end of the novel; Chariton's choice both to condense the pre-marital sequence (falling in love, negotiating to be together, proving their love through trials), which in other novels is expanded to take up the entire narrative, and to begin with the wedding foregrounds the issue of love in marriage. This narrative decision then necessitates the use of a device to separate the couple, thus beginning their respective tests of fidelity to

²³ On the historicity of Hermocrates, see Alain Billault, "De l'histoire au roman: Hermocrate de Syracuse," *Revue des Études Grecques* 102 (1989): 540–48.

one another. The bedroom showdown performs this function in the narrative.

Chariton draws upon Lysias in his depiction of the circumstances preceding Chaereas's fatal—or apparently fatal—kick to Callirhoe.²⁴ It not only has value for eliciting high melodrama, but it also serves to spell out for the reader what exactly happened so as to leave no doubt as to Chaereas's innocence. That his passionate love for his beautiful and devoted wife leads him to kick her accidentally in a fit of anger and jealousy lends a pathetic dimension to this trial scene. It is this pathos that sets the tone for the ensuing trial. Chaereas is entrapped by the jealous machinations of Callirhoe's rejected suitors. Their first attempts to delude Chaereas that his wife has a lover fail because both hero and heroine are naturally inclined to trust one another. A second attempt to convince Chaereas of Callirhoe's adultery is more successful. The rivals use a more sophisticated strategy of persuasion; specifically, they fabricate tangible evidence to support their allegations. Convinced by an actor posing as an informant, Chaereas leaves his house on some pretext, but stays to spy on Callirhoe. During the night, Chaereas sees a strange man, one obviously groomed for a midnight lover's tryst, enter his house. He leaps to the conclusion that this man is his wife's lover, although, lest the reader get the wrong impression, Chariton is careful to explain that the man was actually Callirhoe's maid's seducer. Chaereas rushes into the house in order to catch the man "red-handed" (ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ τὸν μοιχὸν ἀναιρήσων; 1.4.10).²⁵ The idea of being caught in the act itself was a stock element of the bedroom showdown, with the aim to titillate the reader with the promise of sex and violence, as husband catches his wife in bed with her lover. Chariton amplifies

²⁴ Seweryn Hammer, "De amatoriis Graecorum fabulis observationes," in *Charisteria Casimiro de Morawski septuagenario oblata ab amicis, collegis, discipulis* (Cracow: Societatis Philologiae Polonae auxilio Ministerii instructionis Publicae, 1922), 105–10; and Konstantinos A. Kapparis, "Has Chariton Read Lysias 1 'On the Murder of Eratosthenes'?", *Hermes* 128 (2000): 380–83; but cf. Sophie Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 159.

²⁵ The phrase was an important precondition leading to arrest and summary execution in Athenian law for such crimes as adultery as well as theft; see Edward M. Harris, "In the Act' or 'Red Handed'? The *Furtum Manifestum* and *Apagoge* to the Eleven," in *Symposion 1993: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte* (ed. G. Thür; Köln: Böhlau, 1994), 129–46. The phrase also appears in Achilles Tatius (*Leuc. Clit.* 5.19.6 and 7.11.1) in connection with Clitophon's affair with Melite, discussed below.

the eroticism of this stock scene by lingering over the intimate details of Chaereas's entry: the bedroom is dark and silent except for the sound of Chaereas's breathing, which serves as Callirhoe's cue to embrace him.

For the Greek novelists, narrative formulas were made to be broken. Type-scenes are regularly set up, only to be knocked down by some clever twist. In the case of Callirhoe and Chariton, the moment of truth when the husband supposedly uncovers his wife's adultery becomes the moment that precipitates the separation of husband and wife. As the reader knows, Callirhoe had been waiting anxiously for her husband to return: she joyfully jumps up to embrace him, but he, in anger, reflexively kicks her and, as a result, she loses consciousness so that she appears dead to the world.²⁶ Chariton inverts the expected outcome of such scenes: rather than revealing the wife's betrayal, it reveals her fidelity and devotion, at the very moment when she is lost to him.²⁷

When the truth comes to light, Chaereas's reaction is to shut himself in his house all night and to torture the maids, in particular the handmaiden whose lover Chaereas mistook for the adulterer. Chaereas's torture of the handmaiden, aside from its being an element of the script of the bedroom showdown (as well as completely consistent with the stereotypical, upper class view of the social gulf between free man and slave), leads to Chaereas's discovery of his wife's innocence and thereby establishes the reasons for his abject pathos, which will be displayed in the coming trial when he is charged with the crime of murder.

It is a standard device in trial scenes that the logistical details of the trial—the time, place, audience—be marked with descriptive tags so as to raise the reader's expectation that something extraordinary is sure to happen. The day after the alleged murder, the magistrates speedily empanel a jury “out of respect for Hermocrates” (1.5.2). The social prominence of the individuals is another aspect of melodramatic crescendo. In the Greek and Roman legal procedure, the

²⁶ For parallels in Menander, see Alberto Borgogno, “Menandro in Caritone,” *Riv Fil* 99 (1971): 257–63. The astute reader will notice that Chariton only says at this point that she presented merely the “appearance of a dead person” (νεκρῶς εἰκόνα; 1.5.1). For the less-than-astute, a few pages later, Chariton describes the heroine's reawakening to discover she has been entombed alive.

²⁷ The situation is similar to Psyche's discovery of Eros in Apuleius, *Metam.* 5.23.

standard practice was for the accuser to speak first, the defendant second, although actual legal proceedings in the Roman Empire tended to unfold along more inquisitorial lines, where the magistrate exercised greater discretion in the way information was presented to the court.²⁸ Nevertheless, the rhetorical training that was the hallmark of higher education in the Greco-Roman world continued to emphasize set debate (and thus placed great stock in the habit of thinking and speaking in paired speeches). Accordingly, Chaereas's trial follows the standard procedure: the accuser speaks first, but his speech is not presented in direct discourse. The defendant's first speech, by contrast, is. Since this trial has the real purpose of focusing on the hero, he must open the occasion with a bang. Yet the fact that Chaereas stands accused of murdering the eponymous heroine of the novel poses a problem for the author. Chariton clearly tries to portray Chaereas as sympathetically as possible, yet to open with a speech by the accuser would do nothing but alienate the reader early in the novel. This is because, for a writer with any pretensions of being culturally literate, there is no point in composing a poorly arranged and therefore unpersuasive speech. Thus, rather than place his hero in the position of having to refute a speech attacking his character, Chariton vaguely alludes in a genitive absolute to an accusation being spoken (ῥηθείσης γὰρ τῆς κατηγορίας; 1.4.3), essentially collapsing thereby the function of the separate speeches by accuser and defendant by having the defendant paradoxically offer up the speech that the prosecution might have delivered. In this way, the narrative rapidly jumps to the focal point of the trial: the pathos of the husband who mistook his chaste wife for a scheming adulteress. His resultant self-recrimination consists of a hyperbolic plea to be put to death as a parricide, his body cast out of the city and thrown to the bottom of the sea. Chaereas's paradoxical defense strategy in turn is undermined when the assembled Syracusans instead pity him. In another twist, Hermocrates—the father of the victim—steps forward to speak on behalf of Chaereas, the man accused of having killed his daughter!

It is typical of trial scenes in the Greek novels that they do not end with a clear sequence of verdict and punishment. The novelists

²⁸ The procedure is the *cognitio extra ordinem*. For an overview of the procedure, see A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 13–18.

were clearly using type-scenes as an easy way to hook the readers' attention; they then rapidly proceeded to play on the type-scenes in unexpected ways in order to keep that interest. In fact, it is possible to make the argument that no extant novelistic trial scene is perfectly formulaic; it actually becomes part of the generic expectation that the author shows his cleverness by subverting the type-scene. Chariton's first trial thus begins with the striking phrase: "Chaereas did something never before done in a courtroom" (1.5.4); by the time the narrative shifts to Babylon, Chariton is pressed to ramp up the melodrama even further, thus describing in elaborate detail the grandeur of the Persian king's court, which represents the sublime center of the barbarian world and functions as one of the high points of the novel.

With Hermocrates' assertion of his authority as the leading statesman of Syracuse, the trial scene quickly dissolves into a funeral. Hermocrates urges the audience not to allow Callirhoe's corpse to become ugly by further delaying the funeral.²⁹ The jury's vote to acquit Chaereas is a mere validation not only of the leader's will, but of what the reader already knows: that Chaereas is innocent. The trial is but an intermission in the sequence between death and burial, functioning to slow the narrative momentarily, to separate the couple and to linger on a moment of high pathos related to the male protagonist's loss of his beloved wife. It is ironic that in this trial sparked by an (imagined) act of adultery, the husband still loses his wife, but does not gain compensation. Moreover, because he himself is responsible, there is no masculine honor to defend. Instead, his only chance at character redemption is by means of the empathy of the trial spectators as he then joins Hermocrates and the entire city in the performance of the even more spectacular funeral for the (presumably) dead Callirhoe.

²⁹ Chariton *Chaer.* 1.5.7: μή παραδῶμεν χρόνῳ τὴν νεκράν, μηδὲ ἄμορφον τῇ παρολκῇ τὸ σῶμα. Ilaria Ramelli sees specific echoes of Christian story motifs in the subsequent scenes of Callirhoe's burial, her "resurrection" and (particularly) the robbery of her tomb ("Ancient Novels and the New Testament: Possible Contacts," *AN* 5 [2005]: 1–27 [10–13]; on-line at: <http://www.ancientnarrative.com/>). I am not as convinced as to the depth of Chariton's allusions; he uses these motifs for vastly different purposes (i.e., propelling the narrative of adventures) and does not seem to be making either an ideological statement or parodying Christian beliefs.

Achilles Tatius

Because of its triangularity, the archetypal scene of the bedroom showdown furnishes multiple focal points: the husband, the wife, the adulterer. For example, John Porter argues that Lysias's first oration was innovative by having the speaker narrate the typical adultery scenario from the cuckold's perspective, who in comedy was traditionally the object of ridicule, the one who is "bamboozled."³⁰ Similarly innovative was the mid- to late-second-century C.E. writer Achilles Tatius. In the second half of his novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*, he inverts the bedroom showdown so as to have the tale told from the perspective of the adulterer, who is the novel's internal focalizer as well as its eponymous hero. In Achilles Tatius's brilliant variation on the typical innocence and sexual continence of the ideal romance's hero, Clitophon is accused of adultery. At first, the accusation is ironic: the reader knows that Clitophon has not had intercourse with anyone (the genre demands male chastity as well as female) and that he has assiduously been trying to avoid the overtures of the wealthy widow, Melite. However, what starts off as a false accusation evolves into one that becomes substantiated after the fact. It is only after he has been arrested and imprisoned by Thersander (Melite's formerly presumed dead and now newly returned husband) that Melite finally succeeds in seducing Clitophon. This sets off a dizzying series of reciprocal "bamboozling" that spirals into not one but two full-fledged trial scenes, replete with three full speeches each.³¹

Bakhtin believed that the distinguishing characteristic of the novel was parody, a form of "heteroglossia" or "polyphony"—the quality of incorporating a multitude of voices from all levels of society.³² Of the five extant Greek novels, Achilles Tatius's *Leucippe and Clitophon* is often singled out as the exemplar of parodic intent; however, it would be a mischaracterization to place this novel on par with Petronius's edgy, picaresque Latin novel, the *Satyricon*.³³ Achilles Tatius

³⁰ Porter, "Adultery by the Book."

³¹ For a fuller discussion of Achilles Tatius's variation on the adultery scenario, see Sandra Schwartz, "Clitophon the *Moichos*: Achilles Tatius and the Trial Scene in the Greek Novel," *AN* 1 (2001): 93–113.

³² Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," in *Dialogic Imagination*, 41–83.

³³ See further Donald B. Durham, "Parody in Achilles Tatius," *CP* 33 (1938): 1–19; Graham Anderson, *Eros Sophistes: Ancient Novelists at Play* (American Classical

incorporated influences from a wide variety of literary discourses; the richness of the text's allusiveness leaves the impression that the main intent was the ostentatious display of his wittiness and sophistication, rather than sustained parody. He clearly knows the formula of the ideal romance, and his novel features a rich layering of variations on the genre's *topoi*.

Parody is difficult to nail down, particularly in its more muted form in the Greek novels, where it comes out in glancing allusions rather than sustained generic inversions. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to search for allusions to the world outside the text, whether parodic or not. Achilles Tatius was roughly contemporaneous with the various apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, which were circulating orally and textually during the second century C.E.³⁴ Attempts have been made to hone in on specific points in common between Achilles Tatius and the apocryphal Acts. For example, John Winkler identified a parodic reference to the Eucharistic rite in the second book of the novel, where Achilles Tatius digresses on the origins of wine.³⁵ If indeed the novelists expected their audiences to be at least somewhat familiar with various scenarios and motifs that feature prominently in early Christian literature, then the episode of Melite's seduction of Clitophon in the jailhouse in the fifth book of the novel may be in some sort of dialogue with the prison scene found in most

Studies 9; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 23–32; and Kathryn Chew, "Achilles Tatius and Parody," *CJ* 96 (2000): 57–70.

³⁴ The lowest *terminus ante quem* that the papyri have been able to support is around the end of the second century; cf. William H. Willis, "The Robinson-Cologne Papyrus of Achilles Tatius," *GRBS* 31 (1990): 73–102. Internal and stylistic evidence give support for a date a couple of decades earlier. For a concise synopsis of the most recent state of the question regarding Achilles Tatius's historical context, see Helen Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–7.

³⁵ John J. Winkler, "Achilles Tatius: Leucippe and Clitophon," in Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 171–284 (192 n. 25). Dionysus shows Icarius the herdsman how to make wine and tells him, "This is the water of the fruit, the blood of the grape" (*Leuc. Clit.* 2.2.6: καὶ ὁ Διόνυσος ἔφη. Τοῦτό ἐστιν ὀπώρας ὕδωρ, τοῦτό ἐστιν αἷμα βότρυος). Bowersock, approving of Winkler's reading, goes further by suggesting that to interpret this passage as evidence for a Phoenician precedent that Jesus reworks "in the formulation of his Eucharistic program" is "a reckless way to handle evidence that belongs indisputably to a time at least a century or so after the lifetime of Jesus" (*Fiction as History*, 127–28). This fits with Bowersock's argument that the influence of Christian ideas on later Greco-Roman literature has been underappreciated, a position more recently taken up by Ilaria Ramelli ("Ancient Novels and the New Testament").

apocryphal Acts, a prominent motif that, as Judith Perkins argues, reflects a deliberate transvaluation of domestic space among early Christian communities seeking an alternative location to the public realm dominated by civic elites.³⁶ Like the apostle-figure and his followers, Melite and Clitophon are boundary breakers.

It is important to note, of course, that this space in Achilles Tatius's story is not a prison as we see in the apocryphal Acts, but the kind of domestic holding place where an individual could confine a wrongdoer caught red-handed until the city magistrate was ready to deal with the situation. The closet, however, comes closer to functioning as the prison in the narratives of the apocryphal Acts: it is a place into which the hero is violently and unjustly thrown by an angry husband/*paterfamilias*/magistrate. Yet, whereas in the apocryphal Acts the prison becomes a place for a community of Christians to abjure traditional gender-based roles, in Achilles Tatius's novel Clitophon's prison cell becomes a site of seduction, which is itself a form of communion, though the polar opposite of the sexual asceticism valorized in the apocryphal Acts. The apocryphal Acts typically turn the prison into a place of speech where the master shares his wisdom with his followers pending his execution, a common motif in stories of the lives of philosophers (beginning with stories of the death of Socrates).³⁷ Similarly, in the prison cell Melite delivers a pair of speeches, one an *exemplum* of anger, the other of love. Her purpose is to persuade Clitophon to make love, an ironic request considering that, until this point, Clitophon, still haunted by the memory of his lost love Leucippe, had strenuously excused himself from making love to the beautiful, wealthy, sexually experienced Melite.

Unlike Aphrodite in the Homeric scene, the unnamed wife in Lysias's oration and the unconscious Callirhoe, Achilles Tatius's adulteress is an active agent in instigating the adultery; more importantly, she is given a voice. In this highly sophistic novel, speech is everything. In the ensuing trial, Melite's defense is presented indirectly, being attributed to the medium of the panel of *rhetors* working for her. As a woman, she is debarred from publicly addressing the court,

³⁶ Judith Perkins, "Social Geography in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles," in Paschalis and Frangoulidis, *Space in the Ancient Novel*, 118–31.

³⁷ Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 403–4.

yet, as a painstakingly developed character in a sophistic novel, she presents too good an opportunity for a little display of rhetorical flourish. And so her speeches to the prisoner Clitophon, which follow a speech that she makes to Thersander in the privacy of their home, stand as models of the transposition of rhetorical discourse from its proper place, the public sphere, to the most private of locations, the adulterers' secret meeting place. Clitophon rationalizes his submission to her pleas as "medicine for an aching heart," a lame attempt to gloss over his prior, peculiarly overdetermined, insistence on his own *parthenia*, a claim to sexual chastity that would have seemed out of sync with traditional codes of masculinity.³⁸

Clitophon's ironic violation of his own peculiar sexual code leads to a collapse of private and public that includes the breakdown of the boundaries between marriage and adultery, sexuality and chastity, life and death. The next morning, dressed in Melite's clothing, the hero miraculously slips by the prison guard. Even if Achilles Tatius's episode is nothing more than an occasion for a little sex and sophistry, an important functional interval between the bedroom showdown and the trial for adultery, it is hard not to juxtapose it with more elaborate jailhouse scenes in the apocryphal Acts. At the minimum, this may represent another instance of a common script that Christians and others drew upon to organize their understanding of sexuality, as well as the boundaries between public and private. Clitophon's sexual adventures in prison, as well as his escape (in drag), appear parodic, although the parody is not sustained. It does not seem that Achilles Tatius had a particular knowledge or interest in early Christian thought; rather, it is more likely that Achilles Tatius was informed by the "scripts" concerning prison life that were circulating among Christians in the cities of the eastern Roman Empire. The most important purpose in these individual playful inversions of types is the same as Chariton's had been: to use the readers' familiarity with a script to hook them and then to use a new, funny or exciting twist to sustain their interest in continuing to follow the narrative.

This case of the supposed widow who remarries but does not consummate her second marriage until after her first husband comes

³⁸ Clitophon uses this expression in a desperate attempt to excuse himself in a letter to Leucippe; cf. *Leuc. Clit.* 5.20.5: μαθήσῃ τὴν σὴν με παρθενίαν μεμνημένον, εἴ τις ἔστι καὶ ἐν ἀνδράσι παρθενία.

home alive sets up a dizzyingly complex trial scene. Thersander (“wild man”), the first husband, is a villain built upon the stereotype of the comic, bamboozled cuckold. Not only is he violent towards Clitophon, but with the narrative reentrance of Leucippe, the novel’s female protagonist who had also been presumed dead, the adulterous triangle is doubled; he then becomes the personification of aggressive lust for Leucippe. His sycophantic servant, Sosthenes, becomes his procurer, a slavish extension of the master’s violence. In short, Clitophon is caught by Thersander a second time, but in this instance the reader knows that Clitophon has become guilty of the charge of adultery of which, before then and against all commonsensical observation, he had been technically innocent. Another false death of Leucippe—or, to be precise, a false tale of her death—leads Clitophon in his ensuing trial to adopt the preemptive strategy of self-accusation that Chaereas had taken in Chariton’s novel. This then sets off a murder trial that grows only more and more complex until it can only be resolved by the author through the device of a *deus ex machina*, in the form of a pair of ordeals. Leucippe must pass a virginity test and Melite must swear an oath that she did not commit adultery *while Thersander was away*.³⁹ The temporal clause, inserted upon the suggestion of Thersander’s too clever lawyer, ends up saving Melite. In the end, as the type-scene demands, the blustering cuckold is bamboozled and the “true” lovers—that is, Leucippe and Clitophon—escape.

THE ADULTERY TRIAL IN THE *ACTS OF ANDREW*

In the novels of Chariton and Achilles Tatius, we can see the flexibility of the adultery motif, as it goes from the showdown in the bedroom to the face-off in the courtroom. The bedroom scene provides the author with an opportunity to explore the complex dynamics of sexuality, family and home, whereas the courtroom, as a space of verbal contest between men, is the setting where ambiguities congeal into polarities and moral dichotomies are articulated and dramatized. This formula was put to use in the *Acts of Andrew*, the narrative with the highest literary aspirations of the major apocryphal Acts and, as

³⁹ *Leuc. Clit.* 8.11.3; for a more detailed discussion of the wording of the oath, see Schwartz, “Clitophon the *Moichos*,” 108–10.

such, the likeliest candidate for a meaningful comparison with the Greek novels.⁴⁰

The portion of the Acts that is the most expansive—and that was the focal point for Christian readers in the third and fourth centuries C.E.—was the “Passion of Andrew.”⁴¹ The apostle, so the story went, was executed by Aegeates, the intemperate proconsul of Patras, due to his perception that Andrew was responsible for his wife’s rejection of marital relations after twelve years of matrimony. In a sense, the spine of this section is the rivalry between two men who represent opposing poles of power.⁴² This rivalry is sustained by the emphasis on sexual abstinence and the dissolution of marriage promoted in these early Christian narratives, which nurtured a value that is both analogous yet also antithetical to the Greek novels’ valorization of sexual love in marriage. Both sets of narratives actively engage in the construction of an ideal for sexual behavior. Although the ideals are different, the respective narratives draw upon a common reservoir of scripts in the promulgation of their ideologies.

In the apocryphal Acts, all roads lead to martyrdom. Trials, therefore, are an essential element in the story sequence. In fact, in the episodic fictional (or fictionalized) tales of both the Greek novels and the apocryphal Acts, a trial scene forms an indispensable bead on the string. As the representation of a verbal dispute between two parties before an authority figure imbued with the power to inflict punishment, the formulaic trial scene allows for the articulation of ambiguous issues in a society, while at the same time containing the controversy within the safe space of dramatic action or narrative. The agonistic quality of the type scene forces ambiguous situations to be presented as starkly drawn moral dichotomies. The anticipation of a verdict raises the audience’s expectation for a definition in the form of a morally intelligible outcome delivered in a simple verdict.

The formula fits with the propensity in the apocryphal Acts to interpret the world in moral absolutes. Before discussing the events

⁴⁰ Prieur notes that rhetorical and literary features of the *Acts of Andrew* have “une certaine elegance” (*Acta Andreae*, 174).

⁴¹ A survey of the reception of the *Acts of Andrew* in the third and fourth centuries is given in Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 91–111.

⁴² Kate Cooper has made this observation in her reading of the apocryphal Acts. The contest among men in the public forum complements the idealization of womanhood in the literature of the Roman Empire (*The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996], 55).

culminating in Andrew's martyrdom, it is useful to examine the way in which the script of a typical trial is adapted in the earlier episode to suit the purposes of the story. This breakdown of the type-scene makes for a ready comparison of the trial forms in the *Acts of Andrew* to the trials in the Greek novels, the latter of which do not come to definitive conclusions as much as wind down after meandering through surprising twists and turns wherein the leading couple's future together and their very lives are constantly threatened. As a rule, in the Greek novels one of the protagonists is almost always the accused and is usually innocent, if not in deed then at the very least in intention. When the protagonist is subjected to dire (and wrongful) punishment, she or he is always saved at the last minute by the introduction of some new information, the sympathy of the crowd or by some supernatural factor (a lucky necklace, an ordeal, a gust of wind). Moreover, the protagonists of the Greek novels are repeatedly threatened with, and occasionally even subjected to, violent and disfiguring physical violence, but they always end up coming out unscathed, retaining the beauty that is an essential part of their nature.

From this perspective, the apocryphal Acts as a class of narrative are fundamentally different. Because they survive in a more episodic form than the Greek novels do, which purport to be the works of a single author, it is impossible to make any suppositions about authorial intention in the apocryphal Acts and it thus becomes precarious to treat modern editions of the *Acts of Andrew* as reflective of an original that had artistic unity. The epitome of Gregory of Tours provides us with a general sense of the overall structure of this text, even if we know that his folio abridges episodes found in other *testimonia*.⁴³ Nevertheless, enough material remains to allow one to map the script of the adultery trial onto a very different sort of narrative. The result makes it possible to measure the distance between the cognitive structures embodied in these very different, yet contemporaneous, narratives.

The Trial of Sostratus

The first trial-like scene comes in the fourth chapter of Gregory's epitome. It begins when a young Christian man named Sostratus

⁴³ On Gregory's methods, see MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 183–85; and Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 8–12.

approaches Andrew and tells him a tale. His own mother is in love with him and is threatening to accuse him before the proconsul. The script is of the “Phaedra and Hippolytus” variation of the adulterous triangle, which here is intensified by the fact that the aggressive woman lusts after her own son. Sostratus declares that he would rather die than reveal his mother’s crime and so asks Andrew to pray for him. The next event in the sequence is the arrest of Sostratus by the officers of the proconsul, who conducts the hearing. The mother claims that Sostratus tried to rape him; he, however, remains silent. The proconsul confers with his advisers, whereupon Andrew speaks up and chastises the mother, who in turn implies that Andrew was aiding and abetting her son in his crime. The proconsul, angered by these charges, condemns Sostratus to the infamous parricide’s sack and throws Andrew in jail. Andrew prays and suddenly there is an earthquake that causes the proconsul to fall down while lightning strikes the mother. The tribunal then dissolves as the proconsul himself begs Andrew to pray to stop the earthquake. Andrew does and the proconsul is converted and baptized.

Even in Gregory’s summary, we have enough detail to appreciate the way in which the version he was reading put established type-scenes to use in the service of the ideological purposes of the *Acts of Andrew*. This trial serves to establish the apostle’s role as advocate rather than as party to a law case. While it is not unheard of for others to represent the hero in the trial (for instance, Hermocrates speaks on Chaereas’s behalf in the homicide trial in Chariton’s novel, discussed above), it is unusual for the protagonist to represent anyone but himself. As a character, the apostle is an ideal figure with whom the reader (or listener) is meant to identify. Stories illustrating the extraordinary self-mastery of charismatic evangelists helped galvanize fledgling communities of Christians and became even more important in the reinforcement of commitment to the faith in the face of persecution. Thus the narrative focuses on the apostle—how he reacts, what he does, how he solves problems. In narratological terms, the *Acts of Andrew*, like other apocryphal Acts, uses a variable focalization, whereby the story is told from a perspective closely identified with the apostle, but which can shift from character to character. This type of narrative thus affects the exposition of situations that give rise to problems that the apostle must solve. The audience thus follows the apostle’s journey, while the other characters

enter the story only when the apostle meets them. In other words, the characters have no independent role in the narrative prior to the apostle's presence. The logic of this narrative pattern, whereby significant focalizers (i.e., characters from whose perspective the story will be told) might suddenly enter the narrative, requires periodic explanations of the "back-story." For example, no sooner does the narrator introduce a "certain Christian boy named Sostratus" (*puer quidam Sostratus nomine christianus*), then Sostratus immediately proceeds to tell us his story in direct speech.

It is instructive, once again, to use the Greek novels as a point of contrast. In virtually all of the trials in Greek novels, the "crime" is always narrated before the trial. The effect of this sequencing is to establish the reader's ironic knowledge of the truth of the guilt or the innocence of the accused. The reader then derives pleasure from seeing how the revelation of the truth is jeopardized once the trial is set in motion. In the *Acts of Andrew*, however, the pleasure lies elsewhere. The audience sees the world as Andrew engages with it. Many of the events are initially presented as strange; it is only through the apostle's actions and his words that the audience comes to understand right from wrong. The characters in the story whom he converts function as an internal audience with whom the external spectators are expected to identify. There is thus little ironic distance from which the reader can judge the outcome independently of the apostle's narrative guidance.

The crime that leads to Sostratus's trial in the *Acts of Andrew* is drawn from the common store of motifs related to sexual transgression. It is an intensified version of the "Potiphar's wife" motif, found in Genesis 39. Like the bedroom showdown, the core conflict is caused by uncontrolled feminine sexual desire. In this type-scene the Other Man (that is, the man who is not married to the pivotal woman) is a young male who becomes the object of a married woman's desire. The key element of the motif's logic is the involuntary nature of the young man's entanglement in the adulterous triangle. In this variation of the adultery triangle, the Other Man is constructed as the protagonist, albeit a passive one representing male sexual virtue under threat. It thus stands in contrast to adultery scenarios in which the Other Man is an active agent. He either uses force to rape the wife, who is constructed as a passive object, or he uses seduction, a much graver offense in that it implicates the

wife in the crime by making her to some degree an active participant in the violation of the marriage.⁴⁴ Seduction problematizes the issue of the woman's agency in the adulterous triangle. However, the "Potiphar's wife" formula represents the extreme inversion of the seduction scene in that a sexually aggressive woman attempts to seduce the young protagonist; when he proves to be impassive and rejects her advances, she deceives a powerful man (the Husband) by alleging that she was (almost) raped. Thus she uses the normative construction of adultery (Other Man seduces/rapes Wife) against the protagonist while at the same time turning her husband into an unwitting instrument of her own desire to violate the protagonist's bodily integrity, thereby destabilizing relations among men—wherein the true danger lies. In the legend of Joseph, the woman in question is his master's wife; the relationship between the two men is thus between master and servant. In Greek myth, the paradigmatic figure is Phaedra, who comes between the Athenian king Theseus and Hippolytus, his son by a previous wife. In Euripides' tragedy, *Hippolytus*, the source of the conflict is the goddess Aphrodite, who jealously sets out to teach the young man the price of excessive devotion to a chaste goddess like Artemis. Later, the Athenian story was used by the Stoic philosopher Seneca the Younger (in his tragedy *Phaedra*) as an object lesson on the dangers of passion.

The motif reappears in the Greek novels as well. In Xenophon of Ephesus's *Ephesiaca* the full tragic potential of the motif is avoided by making the pivotal female character an unmarried young woman (Manto) still under the authority of her father (Apsyrtus), a merchant whose frequent absence becomes a pretext for her acting out (*Ephes.* 2.5–10). The daughter's overwrought accusation provokes her father summarily to torture Habrocomes, the novel's handsome—and silenced—young hero. But when the truth eventually emerges, the merchant apologizes for his error and makes full restitution by awarding Habrocomes his freedom and setting him up as an overseer of his estate. Similarly, in Heliodorus's novel, an Athenian youth named Cnemon rejects his step-mother's sexual advances and is trapped when he is tricked into playing the role of outraged cuckold in a showdown in his stepmother's bedroom. When Cnemon bursts into

⁴⁴ See further Edward M. Harris, "Did the Athenians Regard Seduction as a Worse Crime than Rape?," *CQ* 40 (1990): 370–77.

the bedroom, expecting to find his step-mother in bed with her lover, he instead finds her in bed with her lawful husband and thereby, according to the logic of the type-scene, puts his own father in the position of adulterer (*Ethiopica* 1.12). As a result, Cnemon is tried and convicted for attempted parricide at a trial where he is prevented from speaking in his own defense.

The Phaedrea/Hippolytus motif, a variation on the adulterous triangle formula, was well-established in Greco-Roman culture. In the trial of Sostratus, there is both an intensification of the motif of "Potiphar's wife," as well as a displacement. The motif is radically intensified in that the pivotal female figure, the aggressor, is the mother of the young man. This element then serves as the premise for the young man's silence: his sense of filial duty results in a countervailing impulse to shield his mother's crime. It is an elegant twist on the motif: not only does the mother-son incest render the female figure doubly villainous, but Sostratus's resistance to both the sexual pressure and the impulse to betray his mother even if he is crushed in the process renders him doubly heroic, a model of Christian self-mastery under extreme duress.

The displacement occurs with respect to the figure of the man to whom the woman makes her false accusation. According to the formula, this would be the husband of the woman, but here the proconsul serves this function, since Sostratus's father is nowhere to be found in the narrative. It is important to underscore that in the "Potiphar's wife" motif, the husband ultimately discovers the truth and redeems the innocent young man. In Sostratus' story, the functions of punishing and redeeming are thus split between the proconsul and the apostle, thereby reifying the ideological divide between evil and good. As we see, in the apocryphal Acts as a whole the various personnel who represent the Roman state have a higher profile than they do in the Greek novels, which for the most part studiously avoid reference to Rome.⁴⁵ The judging authority is therefore more fully rendered in the apocryphal Acts and the conflict between individuals is more likely to unfold in a public space. The

⁴⁵ This is the argument I make in Sandra Schwartz, "Rome in the Greek Novel? Images and Ideas of Empire in Chariton's *Persia*," *Arethusa* 36 (2003): 375–94. It should be noted, however, that Xenophon's novel is an exception for its reference to Roman provincial officials, though not to Rome proper. See Joseph L. Rife, "Officials of the Roman Provinces in Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*," *JPE* 138 (2002): 93–108.

examples of the bedroom showdown in the Greek novels, for instance, indicate that the principle of self-help—that is, of personally taking direct and immediate revenge upon the wrongdoer—was recognized as the socially acceptable way for a husband to redress adultery, being firmly fixed in the popular Greek imagination. In the apocryphal Acts, by contrast, there is a greater interest in setting the resolution of conflict in a public arena, where the soldiers, officers and prison guards who populate the setting also become candidates for conversion. The end of the scene of Sostratus's trial leaves no room for interpretive doubt. It functions as a dramatic assertion of the authority of God over the authority of the state. Fictional trials are much more interesting (and entertaining) for a reading audience when there is a tension between, on the one hand, the court's promise to render a just verdict and, on the other, the recognition that its processes, because they are conducted through the all-too-imperfect medium of human communication, are vulnerable to distortion.

Trial scenes are open-ended affairs not only in the Greek novels, but also in other early Christian narratives, in particular, Luke-Acts. They tend to impel the dramatic conflict forward to the next episode. For instance, the trials in Babylon in Chariton's novel and those in Ephesus in Achilles Tatius's work are elaborate sequences that have other episodes embedded in them. And some are unusual as well. The ending of the Babylon sequence, for example, is rather anti-climactic: after Chariton establishes the grandeur of Babylon as the seat of Persian justice, the trial of the satrap Mithridates for the attempted seduction of Callirhoe, initiated by her (second) husband, Dionysius, ends with revelations that throw the courtroom into chaos. The Persian king declares a recess, during which a war breaks out and diverts his attention to the frontiers of his empire. The promised re-trial never happens. For his part, Achilles Tatius creates a trial whose legal issues are so complex, filled with mind-bogglingly intricate legalese in the speeches, that he can only resolve it with a pair of chastity ordeals, a *deus ex machina* if there ever was one! Similarly, the canonical Acts of the Apostles can be read as a chain of trial scenes following Paul as he travels from one city to the next, ending with his appeal to the Roman emperor. The author of Acts never completes the story of Paul's trial; the open-endedness of Acts has been an abiding puzzle in the interpretation of the work.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁶ See further Sandra Schwartz, "The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in

contrast with the Sostratus episode could not be more stark: the trial comes to a dramatic and decisive closure. The death of the mother by lightning leaves no room for moral ambiguity: the good are rewarded, the evil are punished—a highly satisfactory ending for readers inclined to agree with the work's fundamental ideology. The justice of God, as effectuated by the apostle, overturns the verdict of the proconsul. And what is more, the proconsul himself changes his mind and believes in the truth of the apostle's message. As we shall see, this early trial in the *Acts of Andrew* prefigures another trial scene, which is triggered by another woman whose decisions about how to exercise (or not) her own sexuality set two men at odds with one another.

Part I: The Seduction (Acts Andr. 1–13)

The events leading up to the martyrdom of Andrew formed the most important part of the cycle of the stories related to this apostle. The “Passion of Andrew,” being the ultimate attestation of his faith as a Christian, understandably is represented by the greatest number of extant *testimonia*.⁴⁷ My purpose here is neither to make judgments as to the authenticity of the details, insofar as such a thing is even possible, nor to propose the sequences of recensions of the passion narrative itself.⁴⁸ Rather, I seek to use the template of the adultery trial, established in Greek literature and thought, and adapted in the Sostratus episode of the *Acts of Andrew*, in order to help elucidate the way in which the narrative uses the ideal of radical feminine chastity personified by Maximilla as a catalyst for the reorganization

Acts,” in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (ed. T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele; SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 105–37.

⁴⁷ These are discussed at length in MacDonald, *Acts of Andrew*, 321–23; and Prieur, *Actae Andreae*, 236–83.

⁴⁸ A study of the *Acts of Andrew* modeled after Thomas's analysis of the *Acts of Peter* (*Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel*) would be very interesting. Thomas advances the thesis that the *Acts of Peter* is most fruitfully read as a collection of disparate retellings of stories about the apostle Peter. She examines the multiple versions of Peter's acts not as variants to be reconciled, but as “multi-forms”—the residue of how the larger cycle of Peter stories was told at a given point in the historical development of a particular Christian community, in terms that were most meaningful to the listeners and/or readers at that particular time. It appears that the variants of the acts of Andrew might also benefit from a careful explication of the social and historical contexts of the earliest extant *testimonia* for the stories of Andrew.

of relations among men into a community that is defined within and against not only the marital bedroom, but also the Roman imperial state.

In Prieur's reconstruction, the story of Andrew's adventures in Patras features a series of comings and goings from the main setting, the house of the proconsul Aegeates. It begins with the departure of Aegeates, who has been summoned to Rome by the Emperor Nero and who is therefore away from Patras at the time his brother Stratocles arrives.⁴⁹ Stratocles, identified as a man who had won an exemption from service to the state in order to pursue study, is set up as a foil for his brother, the government official. The woman who comes between these men is Maximilla, Aegeates' wife. Like the men, she is also on the move. When we first meet her, she is twice identified as "leaving her bedroom" (*Acts Andr.* 1.7–8: ἡ Μαξιμίλλα ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ κοιτῶνος; and 2.8: καὶ ἡ Μαξιμίλλα ἀκούσασα ἔξεισι τοῦ κοιτῶνος).

Andrew occupies an ambiguous position within the adultery triangle. He is a paragon of the Other Man, whose entrance into the narrative disrupts relations between Husband and Wife. Yet Andrew's insistence on chastity upends the type-scene and provokes the restructuring of relations. While Stratocles is away on errands, one of the boys accompanying Stratocles on his journey has a seizure. Maximilla comes to help her brother-in-law by sending for a "most god-fearing man" (ἀνὴρ θεοσεβέστατος; 2.11) to cure the boy's sickness. This man is, of course, our hero, whose appearance provokes antithetical reactions: the people who know him immediately yield way, but the servants mistake him for a "shabby tramp" (εὐτελῇ καὶ λιτὸν ἄνδρα; 3.12) and try to beat him. As soon as Maximilla hears that Andrew has arrived, she and her servant Iphidama leave their places and hurry off to fetch Stratocles on their way to see Andrew (κάκεῖναι χαρᾶς πλησθεῖσαι καὶ ἀναπηδήσασαι τῶν τόπων ἔφθασαν πρὸς τὸν Στραοκλέα; 4.2–3). When he himself sees what is happening, Stratocles is somewhat abashed and he chides the sick boy for making such a spectacle of himself (θέαμα γέγονας; 4.6).

This mishap provides the opportunity for Andrew to demonstrate his powers of exorcism. Before he performs the exorcism, however, he looks directly at Maximilla (ἀπείδεν εἰς Μαξιμίλλαν καὶ ἀφορῶν

⁴⁹ On significance of Nero as an archetypal villain in early Christian narrative, see Thomas, *Acts of Peter*, 51–54.

εἰς αὐτὴν ἔλεγεν ταῦτα; 4.7–9), thus engaging her in particular. He prefaces what he is about to show to the assembled crowd (τοῦ παρόντος ὄχλου; 4.16–17) by describing the process of conversion as a “turning” (ἐπιστρέφοντας; 4.10) to faith from both “a great tempest and wandering” (ἐκ πολλῆς ζάλης καὶ πλάνης; 4.9–10), metaphors for the bodily illness that the boy suffers. So far, the house of the absent proconsul is one turned upside down; no one is in their proper place: a crowd has come into the house and a vagrant is now a figure of reverence. After the exorcism is complete, Maximilla leads Andrew and Stratocles by the hand, taking them into her bedroom (ἡ Μαξιμίλλα ἀποκρατοῦσα τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ Ἀνδρέου καὶ τοῦ Στρατοκλέους εἵσεισιν εἰς τὸν κοιτῶνα; 6.1–3). In a different context, this gesture might be read as a scene of seduction.⁵⁰ At the risk of over interpretation, Maximilla’s gesture, with its hand-holding and attendant entry into a bedroom, resonates with the entry of the bride and groom to the nuptial chamber or, given the absence of the man of the house, the entrance of an adulterous couple into the husband’s bedroom, a scenario fraught with resonance in the popular culture of the Mediterranean world. Yet the contrast is deliberately stark: here, a married woman leads not one—a “shabby tramp” who is the antithesis of the type of the suave seducer—not even only two, but “all the brethren present” into her bedroom.

Measured by the formulaic adultery scenario, the subsequent scenes that take place in the wife’s bedroom—that is, the spiritual conversion of Stratocles on the one hand, and the escape of the disciples before an oblivious Aegeates on the other—invert the type-scene itself and accordingly stand as a radical challenge to the social expectations that generate and maintain the type-scene as a recognizable cognitive script. The scene that transpires in the bedroom is not an act of sexual intercourse between a married woman and a strange man, but spiritual conversion described as a metaphorical childbirth between two men—“between” in the sense that one man acts as midwife and the other as parturient mother. The two men, whom

⁵⁰ In Attic vase painting, for instance, the gesture referred to as the “hand on the wrist” (χεῖρ ἐπὶ καρπῷ) was a regular element in the iconography of wedding processions (as well as abductions), where the male is usually the one who takes control, as symbolized by his grasp of a woman’s wrist, which is a metonymic symbol for the sexual act that will occur in the bedroom to which the couple processes. See John H. Oakley and Rebecca H. Sinos, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens* (Wisconsin Studies in Classics; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 32–33.

in the logic of the type-scene are encoded as possible adulterers, instantaneously become a metaphorical mother and midwife, while the women, meanwhile, are relegated to the second ring of the delivery room, to fulfill the important function as birth attendants—"initiates" (αἱ μεμυημένοι; 9.13). The women serve as sympathetic spectators; in Lacanian terms, their gaze mirrors the joy of the "new-born" Stratocles.

The extraordinary creativity of this scenario can only be appreciated when held up to the template of the adultery scene in Greco-Roman literature. In Greek, but particularly in Roman, society the corollary to the imagined coupling of adulterers was the birth of an illegitimate child. Both took place in that one space in the household within which women were in control. The high degree of definition and variation of the bedroom showdown as a type-scene is indicative of a deep-rooted anxiety within a traditional society where social and material capital flowed almost exclusively (with variations over time and space, of course) through patrilineal channels. It is a mistake to see the adultery scene as solely an elaboration of a universal, primal emotion of sexual jealousy. Rather, the scene is situated within the matrix of a patriarchal society.

The worst nightmare for a *paterfamilias* was the introduction into the *familia* of a suppositious child, the outcome of a single act of sexual intercourse between his wife and another man. Control of access to the wife's bedroom was only one part of the husband's power; at the other end of the process the *paterfamilias* had the power, in the theoretical (even if rarely exercised) *ius vitae necisque* ("right of life and death"), whereby the *paterfamilias* was entitled to make the decision in the birthing room itself whether or not to accept the newborn as his. The law made provisions for the *paterfamilias* to have witnesses at the bedside of the parturient mother, in order to prevent the women from trying to swap babies or engaging in other imagined mischief. The birthing room was as mysterious, and consequently as threatening, to men as was the bedroom of the unsupervised wife.

According to the logic of the formulaic adultery scene, the expected act of sexual intercourse is completely elided and eclipsed by the birth of a child. Stratocles' conversion thereby propels the narrative directly to the most dreaded outcome of the adulterous affair. The wife leads Andrew, the Other Man, into her bedroom, whereupon a "new" person emerges from the chamber: Stratocles. Lest the audience

make the equation of Andrew as adulterer and Maximilla as unchaste wife, the narrative transposes an adultery scene to a childbirth scene, with Andrew declaring himself to be a midwife and Stratocles simultaneously becoming both mother and fetus. Andrew urges Stratocles to give in and experience the (metaphorical) physical pains of labor in full view of the brethren in the same way a laboring woman at the moment of crowning needs the perspective of the birth attendant. In fact, Andrew insists that it is “not right” *not* to expose one’s bodily processes to the full view of the attendant, since the safe delivery of the baby depends upon it (οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ δίκαιον μὴ οὐχὶ καὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις τὰς σὰς ὠδῖνας ἐκτίθεσθαι; 9.11–14). The gender reversal is complete in relegating the wife, who is the central pivot of the adultery scenario, to a chorus of women who stand at the edge of the central action, serving as silent witnesses (guarantors, as it were) of the legitimacy of Stratocles’ conversion and seeing to it that the infant(s) are duly registered before their kindred (ἵνα ὑπὸ πλείονων τῶν συγγενῶν ἀναγράφηται; 9.14–15). This metaphor draws upon social rituals in the daily life of the Greco-Roman city, where it was customary for fathers to signal their acknowledgment of paternity by registering their child with the neighborhood board or with the clan.⁵¹

Andrew’s subsequent discourse to the disciples is replete with the vocabulary of legitimization (11–12). Implicitly assuming the mantle of father, he refers to the disciples as “my children.” Legal vocabulary permeates this speech: he defines the conversion as a “seal” (σφραγίδων; 11.2), an object that was widely used in legal transactions and whose value was to certify that an action or an object was acknowledged by a particular authority.⁵² The act of setting a seal, in other words, performs the same function as the placement of the baby at the feet of the father and the father’s lifting up of the newborn. Andrew is bestowing legitimacy on this novel form of family into which his disciples, by virtue of their spiritual rebirth, have been accepted. In his warning of apostasy in the second part of this speech to the disciples (12.1–14), he uses the metaphor of deposit and guardianship to underscore the virtual contractual nature

⁵¹ On *deme* registry in Athens, including its continuation into the Roman period, see James H. Oliver, “From Gennētai to *Curiales*,” *Hesperia* 49 (1980): 30–56.

⁵² *LSJ*, s.v. “σφραγίζω.” The technical definition of the verb “to seal” draws largely upon documentary sources; for the metaphorical usage of the word and its derivative, see Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 187–92.

of the belief into which Stratocles has entered. The soul is analogized to something that one holds in trust and safeguards. The term for deposit (παρακαταθήκη) is also drawn from the world of social contracts made between individuals not only for the safekeeping of property, but also for the safe keeping of minor children—that is, of wards.⁵³ The event that occurred in the bedroom scene is thus defined both in terms of the acknowledgement of a child as one's own and of guardianship. Andrew's reference, in the closing of his speech to the disciples—that the Lord (i.e., the owner of the "property") will reply that to them he is friend, father and brother (with "husband" notably absent)—thus collapses multiple social identities into one.

This concept is then thrown into sharp relief by the reentry into the narrative of Stratocles' antithesis: his brother. As a figure, Aegeates is principally defined within the traditional matrix of social characteristics—brother, husband and state magistrate—that render him a dramatic foil to all three of the principle characters in this section: Stratocles, Maximilla and Andrew. Of course, the adultery type-scene is incomplete without the husband's unexpected arrival, so Aegeates' sudden entry is critical also in this respect. In this formula a typical set of details concerns the wife's panicked attempts to hide her lover or to help him escape from the bedroom. Maximilla thus acts according to type, except for the fact that instead of one Other in the bedroom, she has many: the disciples. Andrew helps the protagonists evade this first obstacle in the plot by praying that the husband will not be able to enter the room until everyone has left. The device whereby this prayer is actualized is a startling comic juxtaposition to the spiritual rebirth of Stratocles. In a bizarrely symmetrical manner to Stratocles' labor pains, Aegeates is overwhelmed by abdominal cramps and calls for a chamber pot, which he uses within the privacy of his house, yet (unbeknownst to him) publicly, in full view of the disciples as they leave the bedroom. Like Stratocles *qua* laboring mother, Aegeates' bodily function is open both to the view of the exiting disciples, who pass before him on their escape out of the bedroom, and, by extension, to the readers of the narrative as well. But unlike the laboring mother, who is physically unable to see the baby's crowning but is aware of its emergence out

⁵³ LSJ, s.v. "παρακαταθήκη."

of her body and into the world, Aegeates is a picture of oblivion, as if he were spiritually blind to the brethren's emergence out of his own house and into the world. It would be an understatement to point out that the product of his labor pains could not be more different from the product of those of Stratocles. Aegeates is thus constructed in the narrative as not only the ultimate bamboozled cuckold, but as the absolute moral antithesis to his brother, the newly converted Christian. The narrative, in short, radically disambiguates the figure of the Roman *vir* by redistributing the "essence" of the image between Stratocles, a chaste Christian brother (doubly so, since he is a biological brother to Aegeates and a metaphorical brother to Maximilla) who belongs to the community of the bedroom, and Aegeates, the hypersexual, animalistic, domineering husband and Roman consul whose business (in all senses) is public.

Part II: The Bedtrick (Acts Andr. 14–26)

In his commentary, Prieur notes the tendency of the *Acts of Andrew* to repeat the same sequence of events in two different settings, a pattern the *Acts of Andrew* shares with other apocryphal Acts.⁵⁴ In the bedroom scene, we see how the narrative constructed the characters of Stratocles and Aegeates as a pair of opposites. In the scene that follows, another division occurs: the scheme devised by Maximilla to send Euclia, a slave girl, as a substitute to her bed to sleep with Aegeates performs the function of splitting the figure of Maximilla and, in the subsequent scene, sloughing off Euclia as one would an "evil twin."

The episode of Maximilla's deception belongs to a motif that Wendy Doniger, borrowing from Shakespearean studies, has labeled the "bedtrick." It goes like this: "You go to bed with someone you think you know, and when you wake up you discover that it was someone else—another man or another woman, or a man instead of a woman, or a woman instead of a man, or a god, or a snake, or a foreigner or alien, or a complete stranger, or your own wife or husband, or your mother or father."⁵⁵ The essence of the motif is simple, but its permutations are anything but. Exploring the

⁵⁴ Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 162–64.

⁵⁵ Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1.

euphemism of “knowing” to mean “having sexual relations (with),” Doniger analyzes the bedtrick motif as a solution to the human paradox of sexual intercourse, an act whereby two separate people gain the most intimate, bodily knowledge of one another. The conundrum of the bedtrick forces the examination of how it could possibly happen that someone could “know” yet not know another person. As a variant of the trickster in myth, the bedtrickster also probes the boundaries between truth and falsehood.⁵⁶ It is no surprise, then, that early Christians, seeking to propagate their vision of the truth, would use this ready-made motif as a matrix within which to set their own belief in absolute spiritual truth against the potential for falsehood inherent in the bodily function of sexuality.

If the first part of the bedroom showdown established Stratocles and Aegeates as polar opposites, the next part splits the figure of Maximilla into chaste wife and unrestrained slave. The “evil twin” here is Euclia, the slave woman whom Maximilla pays to take her place in Aegeates’ bed so that she (Maximilla) may spend her time with Andrew and the other brethren. The bedtrick usually serves as a mechanism to prolong the interval before the climactic moment when the cuckold learns of his wife’s infidelity, but, in this variation of the adultery scene, the wife uses the bedtrick to avoid intercourse with her husband altogether.

In this scene, Maximilla once again is the instigating agent. As before, she takes the initiative to introduce a stranger into her bedroom; however, now she is the one who stays outside, while her husband stays within. The stranger is a woman of lower status, the servant Euclia, who becomes an eager participant in the scheme and uses it to extort money, clothing and her freedom from her mistress, as well as, most fatefully, using the affair to boost her standing among her fellow slaves. Aegeates remains oblivious and one night while he is drunk Euclia brings in two of her fellow slaves to witness her access to Aegeates. Aegeates is the butt of the ruse not only

⁵⁶ Cf. Wendy Doniger, *Carnal Knowledge* (Occasional Papers of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities 21; Berkeley: Regents of the University of California and the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, 2000), 27: “If you define ‘knowledge’ as information that you get via contact with things that are in the outside world, if you believe that knowledge has some element of objectivity in it, and if you define ‘belief’ as something that you hold to be true in the absence of corroboration by objective knowledge, then sex is precisely about the tension between knowledge and belief.”

because he has lost control over who enters and exits his wife's bedroom, but also because, despite his avowals of affection for his wife, he is incapable of recognizing the imposter in his wife's place. Throughout, the text separates inner essence from outer appearance: Andrew prays for Maximilla to wed her "inner man" just as he encouraged Stratocles to give birth to his "inner man." Moreover, Euclia wears the costume of Maximilla and is able to enter Aegeates' bed, whereas Maximilla takes off her habitual costume and is able to escape from Aegeates' bed and from the house. In effect, he remains a cuckold, even though he happens to be at the apex of the adulterous triangle, with Euclia playing the role of the stranger in the bedroom and Maximilla thereby becoming the absent spouse—absent, it should be noted, because she is spending her time with two other men (Andrew and Stratocles) among other supernumeraries.

He is so oblivious that the ruse continues for no less than eight months, at which point Euclia is emboldened to raise the price of her cooperation. The detail of the number of months is intriguing. On the surface, it seems to be a "MacGuffin," a technique of filmmaking identified by Alfred Hitchcock, whereby the filmmaker drops a detail whose specificity seems extraneous, but whose significance is later grasped by the alert reader/viewer. On first reading, the temporal marker "when eight months had passed" (μηνῶν ὀκτὼ διεληλυθότων; 18.1) seems inexplicably specific. Why is this important to the tale? On one level, it confers an aura of historicity to the tale. There is nothing in the subsequent narrative that explains the significance of the detail. In fact, it may be a vestige of an episode in some other telling of the story that was dropped and left as a hole that was never smoothed over. It can perhaps be explained, however, in light of the bedtrick formula. This episode, for example, is in certain respects analogous to the story of Hagar and Sarah, albeit Sarah had very different reasons for placing a surrogate in her husband's bed. The event that destabilizes the women's cooperative relationship is Hagar's pregnancy (Gen 16:4–6). As Doniger elegantly puts it, "Getting pregnant is a big truth teller."⁵⁷ Pregnancy is the "moment of truth" when the physical reality of sex exposes the deception of the bedtrick. Here the significance of "eight months" comes into focus: ancient jurists and medical writers, drawing upon

⁵⁷ Ibid., 13.

Pythagorean calculations of the duration of pregnancies, believed that seven months was the earliest a fetus could be born and remain viable, but that childbirth in the eighth month of pregnancy always resulted in death to a fetus.⁵⁸ In short, “eight months” was a highly inauspicious time in the beginning of a sexual relationship between a man and a woman. A child born alive eight months after a marriage would have been proof of the wife’s premarital unchastity and, by extension, the likelihood of marital infidelity, precisely because the infant is alive and should be dead. Suspicions of premarital sex could provide the husband a pretext for not acknowledging the infant as his own. On the other hand, if after eight months of a presumably ongoing sexual relationship the woman did not become pregnant, that might cast a shadow on the woman’s fertility and/or the man’s potency. The script for stories of “dangerous liaisons”—either the bedroom showdown or the bedtrick—is shaped by the *telos* of pregnancy (or lack thereof) and its consequences for the relationships between the individuals involved. Female fertility is salient for its very absence from the surviving version of the Maximilla segment of the *Acts of Andrew*; accordingly, its transposition onto Stratocles renders it a highly charged metaphor. The fact that Euclia demands her freedom as well as money, and that Maximilla gives it to her unbegrudgingly after eight months, offers a tantalizing clue to decoding the narrative’s construction of sexuality, as well as to understanding the subsequent chain of events.

What finally causes the scheme to unravel is dissension among the household servants. Like Hagar in the story of Sarah and Abraham (Gen 16:4–6), Euclia’s access to the master’s bed upends the pecking order in the household. Euclia easily extorts clothing and jewelry from Maximilla in return for her continuing participation in the charade. As she plays “dress-up” in front of her fellow slaves, she becomes an object of ridicule. Eventually, the fellow slaves ask for proof; she then invites witnesses to come with her into Aegeates’ bedroom. He lies there drunk; when she rouses him, he calls her “Maximilla.” It is an inversion of the Homeric scene of Hephaestus’s entrapment of

⁵⁸ For ancient medical attempts to rationalize this superstition, see Ann Ellis Hanson, “The Eighth Month’s Child and the Etiquette of Birth: *Obsit Omen!*,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 61 (1987): 589–602. This dilemma also provides fodder for dramatic conflict in the novel of Chariton; see Sandra Schwartz, “Callirhoe’s Choice: Biological *vs.* Legal Paternity,” *GRBS* 40 (1999): 23–52.

Ares and Aphrodite: here, the intruder in the bedroom reveals the truth by exposing herself and the cuckold to the gaze of her fellow slaves, while the cuckold remains insensible to what is happening before his very nose and the wife preserves her chastity by her absence. This scene reiterates the prior escape of the believers, passing by Aegeates on the chamber pot on their way out of Maximilla's bedroom. As before, he does not see the strangers in his bedroom, but they "see" him in a position where he is stripped of the trappings of his public power and governed by the demands of his basic bodily functions (sex, defecation).

Overall, the text reflects an aristocratic bias by making Euclia's masquerade as a mistress seem ridiculous, while at the same time valorizing the behavior of aristocrats who shed their privileges. Indeed, following a paradigm of slave behavior, Euclia's uppity demeanor provokes resentment from her fellow servants. When other slaves in the household notice Maximilla coming into the *praetorium* one day, the skein unravels. Ambiguities in the Greek text make the sequence of events in this recognition scene unclear. According to the surviving version, Maximilla was discovered one day as she returned to the *praetorium* in her usual disguise, but in full view of everyone.⁵⁹ Now, some servants already know of her meeting with Andrew and Stratocles—so, apparently, her disguise is not perfect—and on this particular occasion they seize her because they think that she is—or on the pretext that she is (the particle *ὥς* can go both ways)—a strange woman (*ὥς τινος ἀλλοδαπῆς*; 20.4). They then violently strip the disguise and stare at their mistress (*βία ὥσπερ ἀποκαλύψαντες*

⁵⁹ *Acts Andr.* 19.8–10: ἡ δὲ συνήθως μεταμφιασθεῖσα τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἀπάντων ὁρώντων εἶσιν εἰς τὸν τοῦ πραιτωρίου πυλῶνα. The Greek is somewhat ambiguous here. The adverb *συνήθως*, meaning "customarily," modifies the participle *μεταμφιασθεῖσα* ("changing"), with "clothing" as the direct object. Therefore, it is probably better translated as "She, customarily changing her clothing . . ." (i.e., it was her usual practice to come from and go to the *praetorium* in disguise). In other words, it was a usual practice for her to change clothes so as not to be recognized. Further, there is a genitive absolute ("with everyone watching") in the middle of the sentence that may be construed either with the participle or with the finite verb. Prieur construes it with the participles, so as to read "She usually changed her clothing in plain sight" ("Elle changea familièrement de vêtement à la vue de tous"), interpreting it as a sign of her "simplicité nouvelle" (*Acta Andreae*, 466 n. 1). MacDonald, on the other hand, places the genitive absolute with the finite verb and translates thus: "[She] entered the *praetorium* gate in plain sight" (*Acts of Andrew*, 351). I prefer MacDonald's version, as this better explains the subsequent exposure of Euclia by the servants.

αὐτὴν ἐώρων τὴν αὐτῶν δέσποιναν; 20.6–7). In effect, Maximilla is now like Aphrodite in Homer's episode, with her body itself exposed and presented as evidence of her crime to the common view of the community.

Disguise is part of the adultery scenario: Chaereas was misled by an actor, as well as by the costume of his maid's lover. Clitophon, in the role of hero functioning here as seducer/adulterer (μοῖχος), escapes from prison in the wife's (Melite's) clothing. In the *Acts of Andrew*, the wife's disguise allows her to escape sexuality altogether. The disguise of her servant, who dresses "up" as the mistress, however, is something new. Aegeates' discovery of the ruse collapses two of the stereotypical moments of violence: the exposure of the adulterer in the bedroom and the torture of the servants who abetted the adultery.⁶⁰ As soon as Aegeates hears of Maximilla's deception from the hypocritical servants whose silence Maximilla had bought, he tortures Euclia and, in the interest of hushing up the entire affair, has her tongue cut out, leaving her to die of starvation until she in turn is eaten by wild dogs. It is an extreme form of punishment, but described with a certain ambivalence. The introduction of Euclia as "undisciplined with respect to her wanton nature" (φύσει ἄτακτον ὑπερβολῇ; 17.2) establishes her as the moral antithesis to Maximilla; hence, there is the suggestion that Euclia deserved this gruesome punishment for her arrogance: not so much for appropriating Maximilla's sexuality as for succumbing to the temptation to use her own sexuality—or perhaps any sexuality *tout court*—for material and social gain. Euclia's fate foreshadows the extent to which Aegeates' sexual frustration, a monstrous distortion of the mutual erotic passion and heterosexual fidelity valorized in the Greek novels, will lead to wanton violence against anyone who stands between him and his wife. His desperate attempts to persuade his own wife to resume marital relations with him maps perfectly onto the template that we see in the Greek novels, where a lustful rival threatens the chastity of one of the protagonists (such as Thersander vis-à-vis Leucippe). Two functions are thus collapsed into one: Aegeates performs as a rival lover as well as the outraged cuckold.

⁶⁰ Cf. Chaereas's torture of the maids for evidence (Chariton, *Chaer.* 1.5.1–2) and Thersander's challenge to Melite to produce her servants for torture in the context of the trial scene (Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 7.11.5).

This collapse of categories for the adultery scenario has implications for the role of the Other Man as well. The logic of the type-scene requires a rival for the wife's affections: Aegeates can conceive of no other reason for her rejection of him (23.11). Although the reader has a privileged insight into Maximilla's chaste relationships with the other men in her bedroom, the reader also knows that, according to the logic of the narrative, there are only two available male characters to fall into the spot at the third corner of the adulterous triangle: Andrew and Stratocles. Aegeates, however, cannot come to that conclusion. When Maximilla tells him that she is in love with something that he cannot see, he is driven into a rage, but refrains from acting on his rage out of respect for her more distinguished family.

The first person to whom Aegeates turns for help is none other than his brother, Stratocles. Yet, before Stratocles can respond, a servant once again tattles to the master. The text is extremely careful to avoid any implication that Stratocles is a potential rival: it is Andrew who is the target of the servant's allegation. Thus, a very different configuration comes into focus for the adultery scene. Using the very terms Maximilla had used to explain her feelings for the invisible object of her affections, the servant tells Aegeates that his wife publicly displays her longing (*πόθος*) and affection (*στοργή*) for Andrew (25.9).⁶¹ But, so as to eliminate any possibility that the relationship between the two brothers is twisted into the adulterous triangle, the servant alleges that Stratocles is also bound by a desire . . . for Andrew! Furthermore, the desire is doubly disgraceful because it is causing Stratocles to behave like a common person, rather than as a master with servants. As Euclia before had tried to "dress her way up" the pecking order, Stratocles (the servant alleges) embarrasses himself by carrying his own oil flask (rather than having a slave do it) to the gymnasium, which is the site of aristocratic undressing (25.16–17).

Andrew thus disrupts the normal social relations by inspiring in others a desire to slide down or up the established social order. The servant's suggestions indicate that the relationship between Andrew, Stratocles and Maximilla is incomprehensible to Aegeates, as well as to everyone whose status is invested in Aegeates' role as master and

⁶¹ Cf. Konstan, "Acts of Love," 16–17.

proconsul. Stratocles, whom Aegeates had just moments ago addressed as his only living relative, strangely vanishes from the scene at this point. Instead, the unnamed servant assumes the role of ideal brother to Aegeates. When the servant sees Andrew approaching, he becomes the one to take up the role as his brother's avenger, going so far as to assimilate Aegeates' personal quality of being "fearsome" (ὁ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ δεινός).⁶² In an echo of the defining moment of the bedroom showdown when the Husband captures the Other Man, Aegeates' servant lassoes Andrew by a sort of cloth he wrapped around his neck.⁶³ Accordingly, Aegeates then suggests that Andrew seduced his wife—technically, he accuses him of "curing" her without accepting payment from the husband for services rendered and thus rejecting his (Andrew's) role as a paid (wonder) worker. Aegeates' speech culminates in the accusation against Andrew for having many and indiscriminate lovers (ἐραστάς; 26.14). It is important to note that Aegeates places Andrew in the role of the passive partner: his lovers are referred to by the active noun ἐρασταί as opposed to the pathic ἐρωμένοι, thereby (ironically) placing Andrew in the role of prostitute.

Furthermore, Aegeates accuses Andrew of taking newborns (βρεφῶν; 26.14) as lovers, a bizarre accusation that perhaps reflects Aegeates' own perversity but, as the reader will pick up, echoes Stratocles' earlier birthing scene. If we take it as a direct reference on Aegeates' part to the prior scene, we are left having to explain how the formerly oblivious Aegeates would now be aware of what transpired in his

⁶² *Acts Andr.* 26.6–7: ὁ ὅμοιος αὐτῷ δεινός ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτοῦ ἀδελφός, οὐ γὰρ δὴ δοῦλος; καὶ δρομαίως πορευθεὶς λαμβάνεται τοῦ Ἄνδρέα καὶ βίᾳ αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Αἰγεάτην; "[The slave] who was as fearsome as him [Aegeates], as though he [the slave] were his [Aegeates'] brother and not really his slave, rushing forward at Andrew caught him and hauled him back to Aegeates." MacDonald translates δεινός as "fearsome" and Prieur translates it as "*malpaisant*," but the adjective has a broader range of meanings encompassing the idea of a quality that inspires other emotions such as awe or marvel.

⁶³ *Acts Andr.* 26.9: περιβαλὼν αὐτοῦ τῷ αὐχένι ᾧ ἐχρῆτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου ὁ μακάριος σαβάνιον. The syntax makes the ownership of the garment ambiguous; see Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 474 n. 1. The same item is mentioned when Thomas is arrested by Charisius (*Acts of Thomas* 106). The image of clothing is one of the signal details associated with arrests in the Greek novels, equivalent to the English expression "he grabbed him by the collar." Likewise, the physical act of grabbing (or having one's servants grab) the culprit is associated with the husband's capture of the adulterer, as can be seen in Achilles Tatius's novel, when Thersander catches and manhandles Clitophon the adulterer as he escapes in drag (*Leuc. Clit.* 6.5.1). One is further reminded of the Homeric scene where Hephaestus entangles Ares (as well as Aphrodite) in his net.

wife's bedroom that evening. Ironically, Aegeates is correct: Andrew does love "newborns," but only metaphorically. In the context of this narrative, Aegeates is not able to make the necessary metaphorical shift needed to understand the discourse of the believers. Instead, at this point, Aegeates projects upon the figure of Andrew his own sexual confusion brought on by the changed nature of his closest affective relationships with his brother and with his wife. Andrew has doubly usurped Aegeates' position at the apex of a formerly stable network of social ties. With the addition of Stratocles, the adultery scene expands from a simple rivalry between two men over the sexuality of a woman, to a rivalry between two men over the fraternal love of a third man as well. Stratocles in effect displaces Maximilla; his presence neuters the adultery scene and transforms it into a purely and intensely ideological struggle between men for the love and the soul of a newly converted man.

CONCLUSION

The *Acts of Andrew* does not end with the adultery scene. In fact, the ensuing narrative of Andrew's martyrdom is not only the dramatic climax of the *suzjet*, but is the organizing rationale for the entire *fabula* of the apostle's activities. An analysis of Andrew's final teachings to his two primary disciples—Maximilla on the one hand, and Stratocles on the other—that takes into account the themes of vision and invisibility, freedom and imprisonment, sex and love, is beyond the scope of my analysis here. Nevertheless, the explication of the narrative preceding Andrew's passion scene proper helps to underscore the template for the construction of social relationships that the narrative seeks to subvert. Early Christians bought into the typical adultery scene, which provided a well-established literary and cognitive script for the audiences of both the Greek novels and the apocryphal Acts. The adultery trial almost always comes down to a contest between men, with the woman as a trophy.⁶⁴ Although the apocryphal Acts are exciting and engaging narratives, we must not discount the "juicy bits" of the story as mere tissue connecting the

⁶⁴ For this feature in Chariton's novel, see Helen E. Elsom, "Callirhoe: Displaying the Phallic Woman," in *Pornography and Representation in Greek and Rome* (ed. A. Richlin; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 212–30.

ideological muscle of the apostle's discourses. Rather, they too are part of the fabric of the text's construction of a new model for social identity, one in which the distinctions between kin and strangers, free and slave, male and women, become blurred and reorganized. Women serve as mystagogues for new initiates to the faith, facilitating men's transcendence of traditional social roles, even going so far as to accept men into the birthing room not as fathers but as parturient mothers and midwives—in other words, as women.

As the heterosexual relationships in the bedroom are displaced by the constructed love among siblings, the archetypal Wife of the adultery scenario is marginalized. In addressing Maximilla as a wise man (δέομαί σου οὖν τοῦ φρονίμου ἀνδρός; 41), Andrew makes her equal with the other brethren. At the same time, he addresses Stratocles as his young lover, in a hint of Plato's *Symposium*. Although Andrew addresses Maximilla as a man, it is clear that he sees himself in Stratocles (ἔστιν τι ἐν σοὶ ὁμιλήσας ὃν ἐγὼ ὁρῶ ἴδιόν μου; 42.8–9). To Maximilla, Andrew advises her to resist Aegeates's sexual advances, advice given in a string of *alpha privatives* (40.8–9). In contrast, Andrew's encouragement of Stratocles is not only longer, but is presented as the inverse of his advice to Maximilla. To Stratocles he asks, "Do I find myself in you?" (εὐρίσκω ἐν σοὶ ἐμάντον; 42.8). In an escalating series of questions laden with homoerotic imagery (42.8–22), Andrew appeals to Stratocles *not* to resist being united with him—or, more precisely, the ideal form that Stratocles has internalized through his education by Andrew. At the end, Andrew takes Stratocles' hand and declares, "I have the one I was looking for, I have found the one I desired, I own the one I loved" (ἔχω ὃν ἐζήτουν, εὖρον ὃν ἐπόθουν, κρατῶ ὃν ἠγάπων; 43.2–3). Stratocles' responds in equally erotic imagery when he says that Andrew's words are like "flaming javelins," which make him burn with love (στοργή), and "seeds," of which the sower is Andrew (τὰ μὲν σπέρματα τῶν σωτηρίων λόγων δέδεγμαι, σοῦ ὄντος μοι τοῦ σπορέως; 44.9–10). It is thus in Stratocles that Andrew's message is metaphorically consummated.

Where does this leave Maximilla? Her actions move the plot forward, but it is a plot in which she is fated to continue to play a subordinate role. Although Maximilla, as a virtual mother, leads men into the community, it is Stratocles—the one upon whom Andrew bestows his final teachings—who emerges from the narrative as the focalizer. It is his point of view that will carry over beyond the end of the narrative, not Maximilla's. Her chastity might have served as

a model for the female readers for escape from the violence of an oppressive social order, as embodied by the figure of Aegeates; however, within the narrative, her chastity is instrumental to the narrative's denouement. After her final sexual rejection of Aegeates sends him into a rage that will result in the apostle's crucifixion, she fades from the narrative, eclipsed by Stratocles, who makes the final attempt to rescue Andrew. Virginia Burrus argues that the chastity story type of the apocryphal Acts "subverts the authority of any earthly husband or lord"; however, the respective positions of Maximilla and Stratocles at the end of the "Passion of Andrew" are not identical.⁶⁵ The cooperative but unequal partnership between Maximilla and Stratocles maps onto the model of the conclusion of the Greek novels, where at the end, despite the prominence of the female protagonist within the narrative, she is conjoined with (and in some sense now also subsumed under) her male counterpart. Their union then prepares them to (re)enter the world in a position of power. The hints of egalitarianism that surface in both the novels and in the apocryphal Acts, including the intimations from the female characters who take action (Maximilla, Melite), are ultimately subverted by the powerful social dynamics that leave men in control of the message, if not necessarily of the women, even in the "new" social order.

In the end, however, the story is one that was vigorously engaged in creating a point of identification and a cognitive script for *male* readers, perhaps even more so than for female readers. Of course, this is as it needed to be: for men had more to lose—more social power, more prestige, more privilege, more authority over their households—in their acceptance of a new model of a community of believers where chastity, as a form of self-mastery, was the basis of authority. The apostle and his disciples prove their masculinity by mastering themselves, while their antagonists are emasculated through the loss of all social, familial and sexual standing. Ultimately, then, even in the Christian appropriation of the adultery scenario, the heart of it remained: it is a contest between men, with the woman relegated to the sidelines.

⁶⁵ Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Women and Religion 23; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1987), 118.

THE RHETORIC OF THE MATERNAL BODY IN THE *PASSION OF PERPETUA*

Judith Perkins

The account of the *Passion of Perpetua*, in which a young woman, a new mother, a beloved daughter, gives no heed to her father's pleas or her child's needs but instead asserts that her commitment to Christianity requires her to die, gives one pause. As recent studies of early Christian martyrs suggest, our historical moment has complicated the traditional response to such martyr texts.¹ Does that mean that our valorization of this text and similar examples of a willing witness unto death lead toward the slippery slope that ends with the aggressive acts of witnessing that now trouble our times? This essay suggests the contrary: the *Passion of Perpetua*, along with the Christian discourse providing its context, offered an opening that, *if* it had been pursued, would have gone far to assuage the violence that many maintain is the real "universal," the recurring traumatic kernel, at the center of every historical society.²

A REAL UNIVERSAL

Through its representation of martyrs—two of them women: Perpetua, a lactating mother, and Felicitas, pregnant and giving birth in prison—the *Passion of Perpetua* offers an opposing universal. This narrative,

¹ Jan N. Bremmer, "The Motivation of Martyrs: Perpetua and the Palestinians," in *Religion in Cultural Discourse: Essays in Honor of Hans G. Kippenberg on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (ed. B. Luchesi and K. von Stuckrad; Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 52; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 535–54; Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (Gender, Theory, and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 197–203; and Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Blood of Martyrs: Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

² *If* is italicized because obviously this discourse did not assuage violence; the *Passion* itself displays the Carthaginian martyrs' desire for retribution for their suffering (*Passion* 18.8–9), but they deferred this to God and the last judgment. For modern applications of this early attitude, see Nicholas Kwame Apetorgbor, *Tertullian: Die Rache Gottes und die Verpflichtung des Menschen zum Verzicht auf Rache; Die Bedeutung der Theologie Tertullians für das heutige Afrikanische Christentum* (Schriftenreihe THEOS 58; Hamburg: Kovac, 2004).

with its focus on birth, nurture, torture and death, proclaims and reminds us that the vulnerable body is the real universal shared by all humans in all historical periods. As Judith Butler explains, to have a body is to be vulnerable “to a range of touch, a range that includes the eradication of our being at the one end, and the physical support for our lives at the other.”³ For Butler, the recognition that we live “in a world of beings who are by definition physically dependent on one another, physically vulnerable to one another,”⁴ should “provide the basis for a re-imagining of community, one based on interdependence and the acceptance of shared human vulnerability.”⁵ Yet, obvious as it is, human communities traditionally have rejected this shared vulnerability as a universal. Rather than viewing the body as a basis for community, societies instead have employed the body to justify and commodify their stratified hierarchies and to legitimate unequal rankings of the worth and value of various groups.

In her recent book *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*, Martha Nussbaum outlines how the body has worked as a divisive factor in societies rather than serving as a basis for community. She describes how cultures reflect their deep anxiety about humans’ essential animalistic nature by rejecting the bodily stratum as “disgusting.” The natural bodily processes—eating, eliminating, breeding and decaying—become a focus for disgust because they recall the shared vulnerability of all creatures to a cycle ending in decay and death. Rather than accepting this vulnerability as a motivation for cooperation, cultures instead displace the body and the disgust associated with it onto certain groups in their society. Nussbaum describes “the disgust-based social subordination known to all societies, creating groups of humans who allegedly bear the disgusting properties of foulness, smelliness, and contamination. These subordinate humans create so to speak a ‘buffer zone’ between the dominant humans

³ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), 31. Grace Jantzen makes a related case that the Western tradition with its focus on mortality must shift to a new focus on natality, rejecting our long history of gendered death and violence to embrace a natality that implies embodiment, beauty and creativity, including the “web of relations” that being natal implies: no one is born alone (*Death and the Displacement of Beauty* [London: Routledge, 2004], 35–43).

⁴ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

and the aspects of their animality that trouble them.”⁶ Dominant groups, rather than viewing the body as a signal for cooperation and human commonality, engage in the “shady practice” (Nussbaum’s term) of disavowing their own embodiment and displacing the body and its characteristics onto others, who then become defined “as ugly, dirty, defiled, impure, contaminated or sick.”⁷

This displacement has profound effects for sustaining the violence many see as the real universal. Projection of the body onto others causes these other people to be viewed as less fully human, more animal, than the privileged group and thus opens these others to the same disregard and susceptibility to violence that animals experience.⁸ As a mechanism, disgust creates categories of “humans not regarded as humans” and thus restricts the very conception of the human.⁹ The perpetration of violence relies precisely on this “de-realization” (Butler’s term) of the full humanity of others. They are not human, but scum or slime; not victims, but criminals or enemies. By allowing some in a society to “derealize” the full humanity of others, disgust represses the recognition that the body instantiates: the common vulnerability all humans share. Before any community based on interdependence and the acceptance of shared vulnerability can be created, then, all members of a society must acknowledge their own vulnerable bodies and accept the universality of this common state.

Nussbaum offers little hope that disgust and its product, primitive shame, are likely to be eliminated from human society, even though she sees that their “social operations pose dangers to a just society.”¹⁰ An examination of the *Passion of Perpetua* and its discursive context, however, suggests that one project of the proto-orthodox Christian polemic of the second and early third centuries C.E. was to challenge precisely this sort of disgust and shame associated with the

⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 97.

⁷ Iris Marion Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 126.

⁸ Talal Asad, “Torture, or Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment,” in *Social Suffering* (ed. A. Kleinman, V. Das and M. M. Lock; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 285–309 (287).

⁹ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 33–37.

¹⁰ Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 70.

body.¹¹ In their insistence on Christ's bodily, material and fleshly nature, including the fully material nature of the human resurrected body, Christians resisted the traditional Greco-Roman denigration of the body and the social hierarchies erected upon this denigration.

THE WORTH OF THE BODY

The writings of Tertullian, close in both chronology and geography to the *Passion of Perpetua*, provide a context for elucidating the *Passion's* focus on the maternal body and for demonstrating the importance of this maternal body in the period's polemics of disgust. In this essay I argue that the centrality of the female body and human birth processes in the debates of the time calls into question the historical veracity of the *Passion's* emphasis on lactation and parturition in its portraits of the two women martyrs.¹² Their depictions are so rhetorically pertinent to the discourse of the period in Carthage as evidenced by Tertullian as to make suspect the women's authenticity as real persons. Their representations seem to coincide too closely with the theological polemics of the period not to have been crafted to fit a specific historical argument.

In the second and third centuries, Christian representation of a human body for Christ and a resurrected material body for humans deviated from the dominant Greco-Roman conception of the body as a material encumbrance. Elite ideology looked down upon people associated with their bodies, either compelled to use the body for work or needing to work to support bodily needs, and held that the opportunity of living a truly honorable human life was closed to such people.¹³ By their very nature the base occupations of laborers,

¹¹ For an interesting postcolonial interpretation of the relation between the two women martyrs, see John W. Marshall, "Postcolonial Theory and Historical-Critical Practice," in *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse* (ed. C. Vander Stichele and T. Penner; Global Perspectives on the Bible 9; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 93–108.

¹² The loss of Perpetua's testimony as a historical figure will diminish women's history. Her function in this narrative, however, which is to figure the imperative of the vulnerable body's call to interdependence and ethical responsibility, has important implications for the lives of both men and women. See Shelly Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *JFSR* 17 (2001): 39–55.

¹³ William Fitzgerald, "Labor and Laborer in Latin Poetry," *Arethusa* 29 (1996): 389–418 (391).

artisans, trades people and the like were understood to produce base people.¹⁴ In this context of contempt for the bodily stratum, the Christian valorization of the material body was a startling move. As Tertullian points out, Plato's claim for the soul's immortality is obvious (*Res.* 3.1–2), but “no philosophy accepts the resurrection of the flesh” (*Marc.* 5.19.7).¹⁵ Rather than accepting the soul/mind as the “real” self, as the Greco-Roman paradigm did, Tertullian reminds his readers that humans are first of all flesh: “Remember that human in the strict sense means the flesh (*carnem*)” (*Res.* 5.8).¹⁶

In this context, Tertullian can accuse Marcion of “halving human salvation” (*dimidiatio salutis*) by denying the resurrection of the flesh (*Marc.* 1.24). With his claim that the flesh is “consort and coheir, not the servant and handmaid” of the soul, Tertullian highlights the new status for the body in Christian thinking. He invokes Jesus' human body as validation for the new status of the material body and its claim for resurrection: “A decision concerning it [Christ's body] will lay down the law for our own resurrection” (*Renuntiatio eius dabit legem nostrae resurrectioni*; *Carn. Chr.* 1.10; cf. 1 Cor 15:42–49). Tertullian holds that Jesus' flesh was fully material and he rose to heaven in his material body. This ascension acts as a pledge for humans' hope for a material bodily resurrection, as Tertullian proclaims in an emphatic apostrophe: “Have no fear, flesh and blood; you have already in Christ taken possession of heaven and the kingdom of God” (*Res.* 51.3).¹⁷

¹⁴ Paul Veyne, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (vol. 1 of *A History of Private Life*; ed. P. Ariès and G. Duby; trans. A. Goldhammer; Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1987), 137. For Roman attitudes toward work, see John H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 20–47, 149–71; and Sandra R. Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 62–91.

¹⁵ *Camis resurrectionem, de qua proinde nulla philosophia consentit.* Tertullian further asserts that there is no Christian who denies the resurrection (*Res.* 3.20). The texts used for Tertullian's works in this essay are taken from CCSL, except for René Braun, ed. and trans., *Adversus Marcionem: Contre Marcion* (4 vols.; SC 365, 368, 399, 456; Paris: Cerf, 1990–2001). English translations (with adjustments) are taken from Ernest Evans, ed. and trans., *Adversus Marcionem* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972); and idem, *De Carne Christi Liber: Treatise on the Incarnation* (London: SPCK, 1956).

¹⁶ *Hominem autem memento carnem proprie dici* (*Res.* 5.8); cf. “Yet what else is man if not flesh? It was corporeal matter, not animate matter, which first obtained from its author the name of human” (*Quid est autem homo aliud quam caro, siquidem nomen hominis material corporalis, non animalis, ab auctore sortita est?*; *Marc.* 1.24.5).

¹⁷ *Securae estote, caro et sanguis, usurpastis et caelum et regnum dei in Christo.* Tertullian

It is out of this context that the intersection with the female body becomes more understandable. When cultures disavow their vulnerable bodies and project them onto less dominant groups, women's bodies have been a favorite target. Butler describes how the transcendent male subject traditionally referenced in cultures "disavows its socially marked embodiment and, further, projects that disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the feminine sphere, effectively renaming the body as feminine."¹⁸ Societies traditionally have read the female body as the most physical (i.e., animalistic), hence shameful, body. Tertullian provides evidence that those opposing a human body for Christ took special aim at the female body and its processes, especially birth and lactation. Birth processes and infant caretaking, for example, appear to have been a staple of Marcion's argument against a material Christ.¹⁹ Tertullian insists, however, that Christ needed a real birth as a guarantee of his real flesh and that Christ's birth and material nature revoked any shame associated with the material body. Tertullian's defense of Christ's human body thus explicitly challenges his culture's association of the body with shame and contempt.²⁰

Tertullian acknowledges the repulsion that maternal birth processes could evoke; indeed, he uses this common reaction to dispute the legitimacy of Marcion's Christ. Tertullian insists that Marcion's Christ

is writing in reaction to Paul's claim that flesh and blood will not see the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor 15:50). In this passage, Tertullian notes that Christ's flesh is "purer than ours" (*caro et sanguis, etsi nostris puriora, idem tamen et substantia quam ascendit; Res. 51.1*). Pagans, alongside some Christians, were appalled and disgusted by these claims for Jesus' material body and for the resurrection of the flesh, challenging them with a rhetoric of disgust and scatological mockery. Tertullian recounts how opponents attack the flesh: "... its origin, its material, its fate, as being from its beginning foul from the dregs (*faecibus*) of the earth, more foul thereafter because of the slime (*limo*) of its own seminal transmission" (*Res. 4.2*); *An aliud prius vel magis audias ab haeretico quam ab ethnico et non protinus et non ubique convicium carnis, in originem, in materiam, in casum, in omnem exitum eius, immundae a primordio ex faecibus terrae, immundioris deinceps ex seminis sui limo.*

¹⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 16.

¹⁹ Marcion claimed that for many people a nativity for a god was either impossible (*impossibilem*) or unbefitting (*inconvenientem; Carn. Chr. 3.1*).

²⁰ Markus Vinzent has emphasized the prominent place of Christ's resurrection in Marcion's theology and its implication for humans' bodily resurrection; see his "Christ's Resurrection: The Pauline Basis of Marcion's Teaching," *StPatr* 31 (1997): 225–33; and idem, "History Does Not Always Tell Stories: What about the Resurrection of Christ?," in *La narrativa cristiana antica: codici narrativi, strutture formali, schemi retorici* (SEAug 50; Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1995), 133–55.

cannot be the one referred to in the scriptural citation “Whoso shall be ashamed of me, of him also shall I be ashamed” (Luke 9:26), for Marcion’s Christ had experienced nothing anyone could find shameful. Tertullian proclaims that it is his Christ, rather, who has cause for shame, “as the heretics themselves attest with their continual taunts about the squalor of his birth and babyhood and the indignity of his flesh” (*Marc.* 4.21.10).²¹ Using images that likely reflect Marcion’s jibes about Jesus’ shameful birth, Tertullian enumerates the indignities that Marcion’s Christ did not undergo. He never was conceived in a womb, never was called flesh or fetus, never spilled on the ground through the sewer (*cloacam*) of a body with all the uncleanness of the months in the womb, never had his cord cut, never made a mess on his mother’s lap or nuzzled her breasts (*Marc.* 4.21.11).²² Tertullian thus finally asks, “What of all this applies to your Christ, Marcion, as a thing deserving of shame (*confusionis*)?” (*Marc.* 4.21.11).²³

Marcion, according to Tertullian, disdains everything associated with birth processes: “revile that in which flesh and soul begin to be: characterize as a sewer the womb . . . continue your attack on the unclean and shameful torments of child bearing, and after that on the dirty, troublesome, and ridiculous management of the new born child” (*Marc.* 3.11.7).²⁴ In his treatise on Christ’s flesh, Tertullian suggests that Marcion rejects the incarnation as shameful (*indignam*; *Carn. Chr.* 4.1): “Attack the nastiness (*spurcitas*) of the genital elements in the womb, the filthy curdling of moisture and blood, and of the flesh to be nourished for nine months in the same mire (*caeno*) . . . You

²¹ *Qui confuses, inquit, meo fuerit, et ego confundar eius . . . ut etiam haereticorum conviciis pateat, omnem nativitatis et educationis foeditatem et ipsius etiam carnis indignitatem quanta amaritudine possunt, perorantibus.*

²² *Non vulva licet virginis, tamen feminae, coagulatus . . . non caro habitus ante formam, non pecus dictus post figuram, non decem mensium cruciatu deliberatus, non subita dolorum concussione cum tanti temporis coeno per corporis cloacam effusus ad terram, nec statim lucem lacrimis auspicatus ex primo retinaculi sui vulnere, nec multum ablutus, nec sale ac melle medicatus, nec pannis iam sepulturae involucri initiat, nec exinde per immunditias inter sinus volutatus, molestus uberibus.*

²³ *Quid horum Christo tuo competit, Marcion, ad meritum confusionis?* Tertullian concludes with the following statement: “Clearly, of yourself he should be ashamed for your having invented him” (*plane pudere te debet, quod illum ipse finxisti*; *Marc.* 4.21.12).

²⁴ Tertullian questions how these supposed indignities of birth can be worse than the indignities of death: “Nativity cannot be more undignified than death, infancy than a cross, or [human] nature than scourging or [human] flesh than condemnation” (*Marc.* 3.11.7).

shudder, of course, at the child poured out with its afterbirth and smeared with it" (*Carn. Chr.* 4.1–2).²⁵ Tertullian concludes his inventory of Marcion's castigations of birth and its processes by asking Marcion, "Yet how were you born? You hate a human being born: how can you love anyone?" (*Odisti nascentem hominem, et quomodo diligis aliquem?*; 4.2). With this question, Tertullian challenges the foundation of all the mechanisms of disgust and shame for the body that work to divide humans. Only by repressing one's own bodily nature can one despise others on its basis.

The shared human body, if accepted rather than projected outward, provides the basis for a community of vulnerability and interdependence. Tertullian's question "How were you born?" recalls that no human escapes either the physicality or the dependency of birth and infancy. Tertullian explains that Christ, through his unqualified acceptance of materiality and human physical processes, annulled all the shame associated with the body. Unlike Marcion, Tertullian's Christ did love the human who "was curdled in uncleanness in the womb, who was brought forward through shameful organs, who took nourishment through organs of ridicule" (*Certe Christus dilexit hominem illum immuditatis in utero coagulatum, illum pudenda prolatum, illum per ludibria nutritum*; *Carn. Chr.* 4.3). In fact, Christ loved him enough to come down and redeem him at great price (4.4) and, loving him, he also had to value "his nativity and his flesh" (4.3). Tertullian reprimands Marcion, "If these [nativity and flesh] are the human whom God has redeemed, who are you to make them a cause of shame (*erubescenda*) to him who redeemed them or to make them beneath his dignity, when he would not have redeemed them unless he loved them?" (4.4). Tertullian explains that Christ has reformed nativity from death by a heavenly regeneration and he has succored flesh from every distress, leprosy, blindness, palsy, demon possession, even death: "So why would he be ashamed to be born in it?" (*nasci in illam erubescit*; 4.4).²⁶ These passages resonate with the language of shame traditionally evoked in Greco-Roman ideology used for the material body.

²⁵ *Age, iam, spurcitas genitalium in utero elementorum, humoris et sanguinis foeda coagula, carnis ex eodem caeno alendae per novem menses . . . horres utique et infantem cum suis impedimentis profusum, utique et oblitum. Cf. Hanc venerationem naturae, Marcion, despuis, et quomodo natus es?* (*Carn. Chr.* 4.2).

²⁶ *Si haec sunt homo, quem deus redemit, tu haec erubescenda illi facis, quae redemit, et indigna, quae nisi dilexisset non redemisset? Nativitatem reformat a morte regeneratione caelesti, carnem ab omni vexatione restituit, leprosam emaculat, caecam relumat, paralyticam redintegrat,*

Tertullian, however, announces that the physical realities of Christ's incarnation have revoked such shame. God, as Tertullian insists, underwent the insults of nature (*contumelias*), "was born, born, moreover, of a virgin, born with a body of flesh" (*Carn. Chr.* 4.6), so no one any longer has any reason to be ashamed of the body.²⁷ To prove that Christ had received real flesh from a real womb, Tertullian takes no discomfort in citing the most explicit physical evidence in support of his position. To demonstrate that Scripture foretold Christ's fleshly body, Tertullian cites Psalm 22: "And my hope is from my mother's breast. I have been cast upon thee out of the womb" (*Et spes mea ab uberibus matris meae, super te sum proiectus ex vulva*; 20.4). This mention of breasts is cited to support the claim that Christ's flesh was the product of a real pregnancy; otherwise, how could his mother's body have been able to produce milk? Tertullian invokes experts to support his case: "physicians, biologists bear witness concerning the nature of breasts." The breasts flow only when menstrual blood has been distilled into milk: "That is why, during lactation, the monthly periods cease" (20.6).²⁸ Tertullian shows no contempt for processes of the feminine body; nursing and the biology of lactation are not, as they were for Marcion, offered as disgusting features, as too obvious a sign of humans' animal nature and therefore beneath a deity.²⁹

Tertullian in fact suggests that the body's very vulnerability is what endears it to Christ: "He loves the flesh, which in so many ways is his neighbor . . . weak (*infirmam*), feeble (*inbecillam*), uncomely (*inhonestam*)" (*Res.* 9.3–4).³⁰ Without these vulnerabilities there would have been

demoniacam expiat, mortuam resuscitat: et nasci in illam erubescit? (*Carn. Chr.* 4.4). See Eric Francis Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 54–60.

²⁷ *Num erit tam stultum quam credere in deum natum, et quidem ex virgine, et quidem carneum, qui per illas naturae contumelias volutatus sit?* (*Carn. Chr.* 4.4). This passage leads into Tertullian's famous set of paradoxes, which show that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to oppose the wisdom of the world (*Carn. Chr.* 5.4).

²⁸ *Ceterum cum et ubera matris suae nominat—sine dubio quae hausit—respondeant obstetrices et medici et physici de uberum natura, an aliter manare soleant, sine vulvae genitali passione, suspendentibus exinde venis sentinam illam interni sanguinis et ipsa translatione decoquentibus in materiam lactis laetiozem: inde adeo fit, ut uberum tempore menses sanguinis vacent.* For the mechanics of lactation, see Rebecca Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 311–12.

²⁹ Celsus also seems to have objected that no God would have been born "in a body like Jesus was born" (Origen, *Cels.* 1.69).

³⁰ These terms also function in the social vocabulary of the period.

no occasion for God's kindness and Tertullian thus rebukes his opponents for their castigation of the flesh: "Why do you reprove the flesh for those attributes which look to God? . . . I can boldly say if the flesh had not these disabilities, God's kindness, grace, mercy, every beneficent function of God's would have remained inoperative" (*Quid ea exprobras carni, quaedem expectant, quae in deum sperant? . . . Ausim dicere: si haec carni non accidissent, benignitas gratia misericordia omnis vis dei benefica, vacuisset; Res. 9.5*). Tertullian here undercuts the prevailing denigration for the body by representing the body neither as a reproach nor as disgusting. Instead, the body—and in particular the vulnerable body—is offered as an object for compassion and an opportunity for succor. The example of Jesus' real birth in an actual human body unequivocally establishes that to be human is to have a vulnerable body. His acceptance of a body throws into relief the futility of those humans who attempt to disavow their own embodiment and project the body onto some denigrated "others." Christ's body is the proof that there are no exceptions. In being born human, even a god had to assume a human body with all the vulnerability to suffering and death that this body implies. Tertullian thus insists that Christ's body re-inscribes the human body and any shame associated with it. It thus would function also to deconstruct the social hierarchies erected upon the shame associated with body that prevailed in the period. Tertullian's demonstration of universal bodily vulnerability provides the very foundation that Butler suggests is necessary for a new kind of community, one based on interdependence and the acceptance of shared human vulnerability. Recognition of the vulnerability shared by all humans would destabilize that category so necessary for the perpetration of violence—"humans not regarded as human."³¹

These writings by Tertullian, especially *The Flesh of Christ*, *The Resurrection of the Dead* and *Against Marcion*, which focus on the nature of Christ's birth, have been dated to around 208–212 c.e.³² *The Passion of Perpetua* was written around that same time as well, with an accepted date of 203 c.e.³³ Tertullian's writings therefore testify

³¹ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 33.

³² *Adversus Marcionem* likely incorporates even earlier work. Cf. *Marc. 4.17*.

³³ See Jacqueline Amat, ed. and trans., *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité: Suivi des Actes* (SC 417; Paris: Cerf, 1996), 20.

to a contemporary debate surrounding birth and its processes, thus providing a context for reading the *Passion of Perpetua*.³⁴ Moreover, although the *Passion* does not specify the precise location for Perpetua and her companion martyrs' deaths, the references to a large amphitheater with attached soldiers' quarters make Carthage the most likely site.³⁵ This coincidence of date and place suggests that the *Passion's* pronounced physical representation of its two women martyrs, one a lactating mother and the other a pregnant woman giving birth in prison, shares an agenda similar to that reflected in some of Tertullian's writings. The *Passion*, like the works of Tertullian, affirms the material body even in its most flagrant animal manifestations—giving birth and nursing. The descriptions of Perpetua and Felicitas are indeed so pertinent to the discussions around the body during this period as to intimate that rhetoric rather than historical veracity may underlie the emphasis on nursing and birth in their depictions.

IDEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM

The importance of martyr texts in the processes of Christian identity formation and self-fashioning are well attested. Commentators have interpreted their function within the discourses circulating around ritual, spectacle and public performance that lie at the heart of the contemporaneous Greco-Roman society's dialectics of power.³⁶ Reports of martyrdom provided key documents for reformulating and resituating what might look like shaming, humiliating and public executions into public enactments of Christians' positions and beliefs. Christian ideology was thus heavily invested in martyr texts and their representations. In this broader discursive context, the authors or editors of such texts might be motivated to shape and to sharpen their narratives to convey more emphatically their fundamental concepts.

³⁴ See Jan N. Bremmer's excellent discussion of the Perpetua section (with bibliographic survey): "Perpetua and Her Diary: Authenticity, Family and Visions," in *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten* (ed. W. Ameling; Altertumswissenschaftliches Kolloquium 6; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 77–120.

³⁵ Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité*, 22–23.

³⁶ See Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 11–15; and Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 32–68, 105–33 (with citations).

In this light it is noteworthy that several commentators have recently raised doubts about the *Passion's* authenticity. Thomas Heffernan, on the basis of a careful analysis of tense use in the section purported to be written by Perpetua herself, has challenged this section's genuineness.³⁷ For instance, the narrative shows obvious signs of having been constructed after the events it records. Possibilities that allow Perpetua herself in a moment of respite to compose a short narrative on the events of her imprisonment can be imagined.³⁸ Nevertheless, Heffernan's analysis provides support for a different interpretation. He concludes that "[t]he character of Perpetua in the *Passio* is not the 'authentic' person, but rather a self that has been deliberately constructed, and one in the process of being mediated by an editor."³⁹ The editor's claim, moreover, that the text was written in Perpetua's own hand, carries little weight in this historical period of burgeoning pseudepigraphy.⁴⁰ I offer that the emphatic focus on maternity in the representations of Perpetua and Felicitas raises further suspicions regarding the narrative's historical veracity. This narrative's enactment of the worth of the birthing body, a topic so significant for the theological debates of the period, suggests that ideology rather than historical events drives this story.

One goal of the Christian ideology of the period was to reframe and revalue martyrdoms as exemplary of Christian achievements and perspectives. The *Passion's* close correspondence to Tertullian's recommendations for how "paltry and squalid flesh" (*substantiae frivolae ac sordidae*; *Res.* 8.1) comes to win God's favor suggests that the *Passion* functions to enact the merit of even the culturally most material and

³⁷ Thomas J. Heffernan, "Philology and Authorship in *The Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*," *Traditio* 50 (1995): 315–25. Augustine already expressed some suspicions regarding Perpetua's authorship of the materials attributed to her: *Nec illa sic scripsit vel quicumque illud scripsit* (*Nat. orig.* 4.10.12; CSEL 60:1.10).

³⁸ This point is also noted by F. Dolbeau in his review of Thomas Heffernan's argument: "Philology and Authorship in *The Passio*," *REAug* 42 (1996): 312–13.

³⁹ Heffernan, "Philology and Authorship," 324. Heffernan discusses the "diary" as an example of *hypomnemata* (321). For a fuller analysis of this form (and one which incorporates Foucault's commentary on *hypomnemata*), see Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 71–74.

⁴⁰ Ross Shepard Kraemer and Shira L. Lander, "Perpetua and Felicitas," in *The Early Christian World* (ed. P. F. Esler; London: Routledge, 2000), 1048–68 (1056). I do not share their skepticism regarding the dating of the narrative from the late second to early third century. The concern for Christ's maternity and the debate it engendered in the second and third centuries support dating the narrative to this period.

squalid of bodies, the maternal body. The flesh shows its worth, Tertullian proclaims, when “for the faith of the name it is dragged into public and fights it out exposed to public hatred, when it is tormented in prison by darkness and squalor, filth, and rotten food . . . and finally is executed” (*Res.* 8.5).⁴¹ Perpetua locates herself in just such a situation: “We were lodged in the prison; I was terrified, as I had never before been in such darkness. Oh what a terrible day! On account of the crowd, the heat was terrible” (*Post paucos dies recipimur in carcerem; et expaui, quia numquam experta eram tales tenebras. O diem asperum! Aestus ualidus turbarum beneficio; Pass.* 3.5–6).

The introduction immediately frames Perpetua in terms of her maternal body: she “had an infant son at her breast” (*et filium infantem ad ubera; Pass.* 2.2).⁴² Felicitas’s physical state is similarly a focus: “She had been pregnant when she was arrested, and now was in her eighth month” (15.2). Marcion’s description of the maternal body, as a “sewer” filthy with nastiness and muck, attests to the contempt this body could engender. The *Passion*, however, featuring two mothers witnessing to their faith and enduring martyrdom, reframes the maternal body and its regard.

The focus on Perpetua’s maternity continues in the narrative. She describes herself as tormented with concern for her infant (*macerabar; 3.6*) and recounts her relief when she is finally able to nurse him (3.7). She gives the baby to her mother and her brother so they will care for him but she suffers until he is returned. Once she receives him back into her care, she rejoices: “Immediately I recovered and was relieved of my worry and concern for the baby. My prison had suddenly become a palace” (*Et usurpavi ut mecum infans in carcere maneret; et statim conualui et releuata sum a labore et sollicitudine infantis, et factus est mihi carcer subito praetorium; 3.9*). Opponents of “orthodoxy,” like Marcion, had mocked the mechanics of infant caretaking as embarrassing, but the *Passion* portrays Perpetua, this Christian hero, as a *mother*, carefully supplying physical sustenance to her baby, even as she herself endures hardships and is rushed to court and sentenced to death.

⁴¹ *Age iam, quid de ea sentis, cum pro nominis fide in medium extracta et odio publico exposita decertat, cum in carceribus maceratur teterrimo lucis exilio penuria mundi squalore paedore contumelia victus.* For the gender implications of martyr discourse, see Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 59–68.

⁴² On mothers and martyrdom, see Salisbury, *Blood of Martyrs*, 115–29.

The narrative's focus on Perpetua's maternity continues as a central motif. Both her father (5.3) and the governor (6.3) beg Perpetua to pity her son and renounce Christianity, but she refuses. Her father takes her baby, but she asks for him back, explaining, "He had gotten used to being nursed at the breast" (*Quia consueuerat a me infans mammas accipere*; 6.7). Refused the baby, Perpetua describes God's intervention to avert the problems of such an abrupt weaning: "But as God willed the baby had no further desire for the breast, nor did I suffer any inflammation; and so I was relieved of any anxiety for my child and of any discomfort in my breasts" (*Et quomodo Deus uoluit, neque ille amplius mammas desiderauit, neque mihi feruorem fecerunt, ne sollicitudine infantis et dolore mammarum macerarer*; 6.8). Commentators have read Perpetua's self-representation in this section as a renunciation of her motherhood and a move away from her female role toward an embrace of male identity and the spiritual strength it tokens.⁴³ The metaphor of holy women "becoming male" does become an important *topos* in Christian discourse, signifying women's spiritual growth and achievement. And Perpetua does envision herself transformed into a man in her final dream, where she sees herself in the arena fighting against a "hideous" Egyptian.⁴⁴ Yet this single dream apparition ought not overwhelm the primary focus of this narrative, where a mother's, not a man's, body is central.⁴⁵

As the narrative demonstrates, Perpetua does not abandon her baby; rather, he is taken from her. His loss is part of the suffering she endures for her confession of faith. Tertullian would read it as one more item in his list, along with imprisonment, torture and death, which shows the flesh publicly exhibiting its worthiness in the face of suffering. Perpetua emphasizes her anxiety (*sollicitudine, macerarer*) about her baby; she needs God's intervention in order to assuage

⁴³ Margaret Miles, *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Boston: Beacon, 1989), 60–63; and Elizabeth A. Castelli, "'I Will Make Mary Male': Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Early Christian Women in Late Antiquity," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (ed. J. Epstein and K. Straub; New York: Routledge, 1991), 29–49.

⁴⁴ On the Egyptian, see Lloyd A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks* (London: Routledge and Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1989), 110–13.

⁴⁵ Louis Robert, "Une vision de Perpétue à Carthage en 203," *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1982): 228–76 (256–58). Robert suggests that Perpetua's transformation into a man reflects the necessity of her being male in order to participate in the contest.

her pain, both psychic and physical, and she receives it (God sees to it that her baby no longer needs her breasts and that she suffers no inflammation). The narrative finds nothing shameful about a woman's physical processes. Rather, it offers baby, mother and breasts, even their potential infections, as objects of God's attentive care.

This section is steeped in a rhetoric of nurture. It depicts Perpetua sentenced to death, in dreadful conditions, yet nevertheless worried about the proper nourishment of her child. In its double depiction of Perpetua as mother and victim, the narrative offers a stark reminder that, as Butler points out, the body makes humans "physically dependent on one another and physically vulnerable to one another."⁴⁶ Perpetua's dependent baby receives the appropriate nurture, while Perpetua herself faces violence and death. The narrative instantiates for its readers the violation, the rupture (that violence always brings), of the reality of human interdependence that the maternal-infant bond here images. God himself provides the model of proper nurture, as he exhibits his concern and succor for Perpetua's loss of her child and her premature weaning.

Perpetua's first dream affirms this image of divine nurture; God is represented in terms that specifically recall the female body and its modality. In her dream, Perpetua climbs a ladder to heaven and reaches a garden to find a tall white-haired man dressed like a shepherd, milking sheep (4.8). He calls her "child" and gives her a mouthful of the cheese he milked (*de caseo quod mulgebat dedit mihi quasi bucellam*; 4.9). Here God's invocation of her as "child" and the offering of milk image the mother-child bond together.⁴⁷ Again, the narrative stresses that human physical dependency calls for nurture. The vulnerable body's claim is for sustenance, not violence.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 27.

⁴⁷ Bremmer notes that, when non-parents use the Greek *teknon*, they normally stand in a *loco parentis* role to the addressee ("Perpetua and Her Diary," 103, citing Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996]). He also points out the Eucharistic overtone of the dream (104).

⁴⁸ As described in the *Passion*, the dream of Saturus, the leader of the group of martyrs, similarly depicts a gesture evoking God's paternal care. When the martyrs reach heaven, angels lift them up to kiss God, who touches their faces with his hand (*Pass.* 12.5). Jan N. Bremmer notes that "[t]he touching of the faces suggests intimacy, but the absence of reciprocity in kissing also indicates a certain distance between God and the martyrs" ("The Vision of Saturus in the *Passio Perpetuae*," in

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The narrative of Perpetua exploits her maternity to emphasize the interdependence and call to nurture that the maternal body signals. In a similar vein, the text then turns to Felicitas's body, which redirects attention to the physical processes of birth. Felicitas is introduced rather abruptly and again maternity is the focus. The editor reports that Felicitas was concerned that, because of the law against executing pregnant women, she would have to wait and be executed with regular criminals (*sceleratos*; 15.2) rather than with her Christian companions. Her community, however, offers prayers that are answered by the onset of Felicitas's birth pains. The narrator notes the difficulty of Felicitas's premature labor and records the taunts of one of the guards: "You suffer so much now—what will you do when you are tossed to the beasts?" (15.5). Felicitas answers him, "What I am suffering now . . . I suffer by myself. But then another will be inside me who will suffer for me, just as I will be suffering for him" (15.6).

This vignette endorses Christians' understanding of martyrdom as predicated upon and joined to Christ's sacrificial death. Robin Darling Young has described how martyrs trained for martyrdom and came to understand it as a "highly public sacrificial liturgy," which offered "a recapitulation of the sacrifice of Christ."⁴⁹ In this light the dismay of Felicitas and her community that she would be executed separately is understandable. Dying alone, deprived of group support and shared experience, Felicitas would lack the ritual and communal liturgical understanding of her death that would have made it bearable. Felicitas's reply to the jailer exhibits this special nature of the martyr's death, one that might be especially cherished by women whose childbearing made them so vulnerable to premature natural death. Not by accident, then, Tertullian's exhortation appears specifically aimed at women: "Seek not to die in bridal beds, or in miscarriages, or from gentle fevers, but die as a martyr that he may be glorified who suffered for you" (*Nolite in lectulis nec in aborsibus et febribus mollibus optare exire, sed in martyriis, uti glorificetur, qui est passus pro vobis*; *Fug.* 9.4). After giving birth, Felicitas relinquishes her baby over to

Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst [ed. F. G. Martínez and G. P. Luttikhuisen; JSJSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 55–73 [65]. For further discussion, see Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité*, 63, 237–38.

⁴⁹ Young, *In Procession before the World*, 24, 59.

the care of another Christian, who, the narrative notes, “brought her up as her own daughter” (*Pass.* 15.7), which again evidences concern with proper nurture. In its depiction of Felicitas as a mother who has just newly delivered a child, the narrative continues its emphasis on the merit and glory achieved by this material body in its most flagrantly physical condition.

As the group of martyrs marches toward the arena, the two women are described first. The narrative offers Perpetua as the wife of Christ, the cherished daughter of God (*ut matrona Christi, ut Dei delicate; Pass.* 18.2), but its description of Felicitas’s body vividly insists on her messy corporeal nature: “With them went Felicitas rejoicing that she had safely given birth so that she could fight the beasts, going from blood bath to blood bath, from the midwife to the net fighter, ready to wash after child birth in a second baptism” (*Item Felicitas, saluam se peperisse gaudens ut ad bestias pugnaret, a sanguine ad sanguinem, ab obstetrice ad retiarium, lotura post partum baptismo secundo; 18.3*). With its references to blood and washing, this description taps into the traditional register of disgust associated with the female body only to reject it. It fixes the narrative gaze on the female body marked by all the detritus of the afterbirth, only to see the worth of this body affirmed in the blood of martyrdom, its second baptism.⁵⁰ This public reinscription of the birthing body presents a compelling affirmation of Christianity’s acceptance of the value of the material body and elucidates its effort to extricate this body from traditional, more negative Greco-Roman constructions.

The narrative appeals to the maternal body one final time when it describes the audience’s shock at seeing Perpetua and Felicitas dragged naked into the arena in nets: “The crowd shuddered (*horruit*) to see that one was a delicate girl and the other fresh from child birth with her breasts still dripping milk” (*Horruit populus alteram respiciens puellam delicatam, alteram a partu recentem stillantibus mammis; 20.2*). The narrative presents the crowd’s horror as both a recognition of and a recoiling from the claim that these women’s bodies makes upon them.⁵¹ Perpetua’s fragile delicacy displays for all to see

⁵⁰ Saturus’s bleeding caused by a leopard’s bite is also noted and called a second baptism (*Pass.* 21.2). Cf. Tertullian, *Bapt.* 1.16.1.

⁵¹ Castelli suggests that the narrator in this scene places the reader in the “role of a voyeuristic spectator” (*Martyrdom and Memory*, 123). In my reading, the narrator

the inherent vulnerability of the human body; juxtaposed, Felicitas's body, with its seeping breasts, proclaims the bonds of human interdependence that make human bodily life possible.⁵² By representing the bodies of two women martyrs about to undergo torture and death even as one of them leaks milk, the narrative enacts for its readers, even if the observation was lost on the crowd in the arena, the recognition that "violence is always an exploitation of the primary tie," the tie between infant and nurturer.⁵³

CONCLUSIONS

With its physical and redundant portrayal of the merit and honor of these two maternal martyrs, the *Passion* reflects issues central to the contemporary debates around Christ's real flesh and his real birth. This correlation raises suspicions that the representation of one or both of the women has been constructed in order to valorize the maternal body featured in these debates. This correlation alone does not allow for a definitive decision regarding the reality reflected in Perpetua's and Felicitas's depictions, but it does make this reality less likely. I suspect both descriptions are rhetorical rather than realistic, but Felicitas's is the more questionable of the two. First, the Perpetua section does not refer to her and, second, a feature of texts with a message is that they make their points redundantly.⁵⁴ This text's use of two characters to manifest the same qualities is an example of

rather seems intent to drain these naked bodies of sexual valence with his characterization of even the crowd's reaction as one of "shuddering" at the sight. *Delicata* can certainly carry sexual overtones, but it does not seem to do so here.

⁵² Brent D. Shaw discusses the choice of the "wild cow" (20.1) to harass the women in the arena. He suggests it was "to mock their sex. By analogy with a bull, it was implied that they were sexually shameful; but since a cow was employed, the inference was that they were not 'real women' enough to be guilty of adultery" ("The Passion of Perpetua," *Past and Present* 139 [1993]: 1–45 [7–8]). Amat suggests that black humor infects the choice of a cow (*Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité*, 255). Her suggestion that the reference to a "heifer" in the Greek text is a better choice than "cow" (*vacca*) overlooks the prevalence of the theme of lactation in the narrative.

⁵³ Butler, *Precarious Life*, 27. I owe to Todd Penner the suggestion that this reference to milk, with its invocation of the maternal bond and the interdependence it connotes, may have a symbolic resonance here. Through this reference the corporate liturgical nature of martyrdom is tied to the visceral (primal/primary) corporality evident in the narrative itself.

⁵⁴ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 159–71.

such redundancy and, since Felicitas is the less developed character, her representation is more likely to result from the exigencies of the narrative's message.

The Christian discourse of the second century represents in unflinching terms the body in its most physical aspects, arguing further that God loved this body enough to accept it for himself with all its natural vulnerability. With this move Christians undercut one of the most divisive tactics of every society: dominant groups disavow their socially marked bodies and then project this disavowed and disparaged embodiment on the more vulnerable groups in their society⁵⁵—women, the lower class, foreigners or people with different values or behaviors, all the while exempting themselves from that same bodily vulnerability. This tactic allows dominant groups to de-realize the true situation of others suffering in their midst and to refuse the shared vulnerability of the body as a source of community.

Early Christian discourse, however, offers this vulnerability to suffering as the distinguishing mark of its concept of humanity. In his debate with Apelles over Jesus' real birth, Tertullian repeatedly stresses this point about the human condition. Apelles apparently conceded that Christ did have flesh but nonetheless maintained Christ had not been born. Rather, Christ's flesh was like that of the angels in the Scriptures when they appeared to humans; it came from some celestial source. Tertullian rejects this idea, for, he suggests, to accept it would be to deny that Christ had truly entered into the human condition and shared in its vulnerability. Apelles' position would eliminate Christ as a model. For, as Tertullian insists, to be human is to share humanity's vulnerability and mortality. Tertullian asserts that the difference between these angels and Christ is that they, unlike Christ, had not come to suffer and die: "Never did any angel descend for the purpose of being crucified, of tasting death, and of rising again from the dead . . . They had not come to die, therefore [they] had no need to be born. Christ, however, having been sent to die, had of necessity also to be born, that he might die. For customarily nothing dies but that which is born. Between nativity and

⁵⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 16. This sentence is almost a direct quotation from Butler. Her reference, however, was specifically to males' projection of the body onto the feminine sphere; yet this tactic is used against many vulnerable groups in societies.

mortality there is a mutual debt. The project of dying is the reason for being born" (*Carn. Chr.* 6.5–6; cf. *Marc.* 3.9).⁵⁶

With his statement that "the project of dying is the reason for being born" (*forma moriendi causa nascendi est*), Tertullian emphasizes the inherent vulnerability of every human body. The difference between Jesus' two natures confirms this universal vulnerability: "The powers of the spirit of God proved him God, the sufferings proved his human flesh" (*virtutes spiritus dei deum, passionem carnem hominis probaverunt; Carn. Chr.* 5.7). This demonstration of universal vulnerability is precisely what Butler suggested "should provide the basis for a re-imagining of community, one based on interdependence and the acceptance of shared human vulnerability."⁵⁷ It also corresponds to the Dalai Lama's definition of the beginning of wisdom: "to realize that all living beings are equal in not wanting unhappiness and suffering and equal in the right to rid themselves of suffering."⁵⁸ Recognition of this equality premised on shared vulnerability might mitigate, Butler suggests, the violence that often results from the "derealization" of others' full humanity. With his emphasis on Jesus' material body, Tertullian proclaimed this equality in his writings. Moreover, the representation of the death of the mother martyrs—Perpetua and Felicitas—in the arena actualized the vulnerability of all bodies "to a range of touch, a range that includes the eradication of our being at the one end, and the physical support for our lives at the other."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ *Nullus unquam angelus ideo descendit ut crucifigeretur, ut mortem experiretur, ut a morte suscitaretur . . . non venerant mori, ideo nec nasci. At vero Christus mori missus nasci quoque necessario habuit, ut mori posset; non enim mori solet nisi quod nascitur. Mutuum debitum est nativitati cum mortalitate. Forma moriendi causa nascendi est.*

⁵⁷ Butler observes that the recognition of common vulnerability is crucial: "It follows that vulnerability is fundamentally dependent on existing norms of recognition if it is to be attributed to any human subject" (*Precarious Life*, 43).

⁵⁸ Cited in Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2003), 23.

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, 31.

WEARING IT WELL:
GENDER AT WORK IN THE SHADOW OF EMPIRE

Chris Frilingos

On this brief journey into the unstable domain of gender in antiquity, various figures will serve as guideposts, including a pair of prostitutes, one from the book of Revelation, the other from late antique Antioch. I begin with the latter. She plays the starring role in a story about a woman who became a man who became a woman.¹ Our narrator, James the Deacon, relates this astonishing tale of sin and redemption: he recounts that eight bishops, including his own, Nonnus, were called to the church of the martyr Julian. Gathered outside the door, the bishops persuaded Nonnus to speak to them. They listened intently, until they were distracted by the arrival of Pelagia, an actress and—what is the same thing to late antique minds—a prostitute. James describes the alarming encounter:

Now while we were marveling at his holy teaching, lo, suddenly there came among us the chief actress of Antioch, the first in the chorus of the theatre, sitting on a donkey. She was dressed in the height of fantasy, wearing nothing but gold, pearls and precious stones, even her bare feet were covered with gold and pearls. With her a great throng of boys and girls all dressed in cloth of gold with collars of gold on their necks going before and following her. So great was her beauty that all the ages of mankind could never come to the end of it. (*Pelagia* 2)

The holy men were appalled: “there was not one who did not hide his face in his veil or his scapular, averting their eyes as if from a very great sin” (2). Not one but Nonnus, that is.

¹ James the Deacon, *Life of Saint Pelagia the Harlot*. I follow the English translation of Benedicta Ward, *Harlots of the Desert* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1987), 35–56, which is based on the Latin text *Vita Sanctae Pelagiae, Meretricis* found in *PL* 73:663–72. Also see the English translation from the Syriac, the earliest extant witness, in Sebastian Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, ed. and trans., *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (TCH 13; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 41–62. On the dating of the account, see Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women*, 40. My reading of this life is shaped by Virginia Burrus’s analysis in *Sex Lives of the Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 128–59. Translations from the biblical text are taken from the NRSV; those from other classical sources are from the LCL.

The great bishop stared at Pelagia without compunction; even “after she had gone by, he turned round and still gazed after her” (3). Sensing that his behavior had left his fellow bishops confused, Nonnus declared that he admired not only Pelagia’s appearance but also the effort behind the façade; he himself and the bishops, by contrast, possessed nothing as beautiful: “What do you think, beloved brothers, how many hours does this woman spend in her chamber giving all her mind and attention to adorning herself for the play, in order to lack nothing in the beauty and the adornment of her body?” (3). But we, Nonnus continued, “why do we not adorn ourselves and wash the dirt from our unhappy souls, why do we let ourselves lie so neglected . . . I know I am a sinner and unworthy, for today the ornaments of a harlot have shone more brightly than the ornaments of my soul” (3–4). One wonders if this explanation brought relief to the troubled minds of the clergy.

No matter, for now there was a connection between Nonnus and Pelagia and soon afterwards she sought out the bishop. The two exchanged letters and Pelagia returned to the church, this time without her retinue of collared children, insisting that Nonnus should baptize her. Eight days later, Pelagia shed her baptismal robe, put on instead the tunic of Nonnus and secretly left for the Mount of Olives, upon which she built a monastic cell.

Several years passed before James met Pelagia again and, when he did, he did not realize that he had. When James asked Nonnus to give him leave to conduct a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the bishop assented, slyly adding, “When you reach the city of Jerusalem, ask the whereabouts of a certain brother Pelagius, a monk and a eunuch . . . go and visit him; truly I think you will be helped by him” (13). The benighted James, not understanding that Pelagia had become “Pelagius,” followed his master’s instructions; and while Pelagia-turned-Pelagius recognized him, the deacon remained ignorant of this new identity: “How,” pleads James, “could I have known her again with a face so emaciated by fasting?” (14). Their conversation was brief: at the mention of Nonnus, Pelagius remarked, “Tell him to pray for me, for he is a saint of God” (14). James returned to the city, learning predictably that the fame of Pelagius resounded throughout the monasteries of Jerusalem. Impressed, he went to Pelagius again but was too late: in the cell he found a dead monk.

James disseminated the news to the monks of Jerusalem and they converged upon the Mount of Olives to prepare the body for burial,

bearing "his sacred little body as if it had been gold and silver they were carrying" (15). But flesh is not gold nor was this body a "him," as the monks realized when they anointed it with myrrh. At first they tried to hide the discovery, "but they could not," reports James, "because of the crowds of people thronging around, who cried out with a loud voice, 'Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for you have hidden away on earth such great treasures, women as well as men'" (15). "So," concludes James, "it was known to all the people" (16): a woman who became a man who became a woman.

GENDER AT WORK

The story of Pelagia, one of the most popular of the ancient Christian "Harlot Lives," is shot through with biblical allusions. As Patricia Cox Miller has observed, the opening tableau recalls two especially striking and incongruous images: on the one hand, Pelagia seems to suggest the book of Revelation's infamous prostitute, Babylon, "golden and bejeweled, an incarnation of lust, idolatry, and shamelessness"; on the other, Pelagia, parading in front of a crowd, evokes the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.² The dissonance is both disquieting and captivating. Miller, adapting a concept from Geoffrey Galt Harpham, helpfully labels the scene "grotesque," for it calls into question "the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world."³ In this scene the figure of Pelagia stitches together what elsewhere had been kept apart: the "triumphal entry" is combined with the spectacle of Babylon. This monstrous pairing overwhelms most of the bishops but not Nonnus: Pelagia's assiduous preparation, "the adornment of her body," gives the holy man pause, preparing the way for the transformations that come later.

The first scene of Pelagia's story disturbs "our ways of organizing the world"; more still, the rest of the narrative calls into question the standard scholarly template for describing ancient gender. The regnant view remains that ancient Mediterranean society understood

² Patricia Cox Miller, "Is There a Harlot in This Text? Hagiography and the Grotesque," *JMEMS* 33 (2003): 419–35 (427–28). See also Lynda Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 28–29, 83.

³ Miller, "Is There a Harlot in This Text?," 424, citing Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 3.

gender according to oppositional pairs of hardness and softness, activity and passivity. Masculinity was plotted onto a “penetration grid” so that the penetrator was manly, the penetrated not so, no matter the physiologies of either.⁴ There can be little doubt that the gendered ideal of the high empire was embodied in what Jonathan Walters labels “the inviolable Roman male,” an upper-class, impenetrable adult body, mirroring the “impenetrable boundaries of the social body.”⁵ In the remainder of this essay, however, I will focus on figures that stand on the margins of this penetration grid, including the Roman gladiator and two characters from the book of Revelation, Babylon and the Lamb. These figures mimicked aspects of the imperial “public transcript” of gender and sexuality, without precisely reproducing it, thwarting (by design or not) the totalizing objective of this transcript.⁶ Such examples are worth attending to, for, as Homi Bhabha contends, the mimicry of colonial encounters “is at once resemblance and menace” and, in the charged space between mimicry and mimesis, these grotesque expressions issued a challenge to the authority of the prevailing discourse.⁷

The thread connecting these grotesque characters is public performance: all of them, like Pelagia, make spectacles of themselves. But why were some successful and others reviled and ridiculed? The success of a second-century C.E. sophist from Gaul, Favorinus, can shed some light on this question. Born without testicles (a *monstrum*) in southern France, Favorinus grew up to be one of the best-loved speakers of his day. More than one observer took the time to make a record of this unusual character: the fullest, harshest assessment comes from the pen of another widely admired orator, Polemo. With a physiognomist’s practiced eye, Polemo describes Favorinus as “libidinous and dissolute beyond all bounds,” with a voice “like a woman’s” and body parts that were “uniformly soft.”⁸ These are physical defects

⁴ For a summary of and critical engagement with recent scholarship on ancient gender and sexuality, see Stephen D. Moore, *God’s Beauty Parlor and Other Queer Spaces in and Around the Bible* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 135–46.

⁵ Jonathan Walters, “Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought,” in *Roman Sexualities* (ed. J. P. Hallett and M. B. Skinner; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 29–43 (37).

⁶ On the “public transcript,” see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 45–69.

⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 123.

⁸ All quotations are from Maud W. Gleason’s English translation of Polemo’s

to a mind like Polemo's, which is in conformity with the penetration grid; yet even he concedes that everywhere crowds flocked to hear Favorinus.⁹

Favorinus wowed audiences, even making "men believe that he could compel women to pursue men the way men pursue women." High-pitched voice and all, he carried the banner for Greek *paideia*: Greek education and culture had turned the *monstrum* of Gaul into "an international celebrity in the Roman Empire."¹⁰ In seeking to explain Favorinus's popularity, Maud Gleason makes the suggestive proposal that "it must have added to his appeal, in ways that we cannot quite assess, that he somehow managed to combine the charm of a certain feminine softness with the articulate dignity of a man."¹¹ The criticism of opponents reveals another reason: when Polemo notes that Favorinus "took great care of his abundant tresses, rubbed ointments on his body, and cultivated everything that excites the desire for coitus and lust," we should recognize here a stock charge of effeminacy and, by extension, of immorality. But we should also notice the energy channeled into Favorinus's self-presentation. In a society enamored of the "hyper-masculinity" favored by Polemo, Favorinus was cheered, not in spite of but because of his carefully crafted, ambiguous appearance. Gleason concludes that "there was something manly, after all, about taking risks—even the risk of being called effeminate."¹² For Favorinus, it was a calculated risk.

"Manliness was not a birthright," concludes Gleason. "It was something that had to be won"¹³—and won before an audience. Yet in some corners of the Roman Empire (not all, witness Polemo) gender coding along rigid axes of activity and passivity, hardness and softness, penetrator and penetrated, had begun to yield to something

De physiognomia in *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 7. She bases her version on the Latin translation of the Arabic text in R. Förster, ed., *Scriptores Physiognomonici Graeci et Latini* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), 1:160–64.

⁹ As Gleason observes, "In Asia Minor, Polemo was all the rage at Smyrna, but Favorinus was the darling of Ephesus. In Greece he dazzled the Corinthians; they voted him a public statue" (*Making Men*, 8).

¹⁰ Gleason, *Making Men*, 17. For more on *paideia* and self-fashioning in the Roman Empire, see Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. 69–130.

¹¹ Gleason, *Making Men*, xxviii.

¹² *Ibid.*, 162.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 159.

else.¹⁴ Ambiguity was tolerated, even celebrated, as long as the performance itself was convincing, which is to say, as long as the audience found it convincing. It was, paradoxically, the authenticity of the artifice that seems to matter in these examples, an admission not only that gender, more specifically masculinity, was not innate, but also that the codes themselves could be skillfully manipulated by a disciplined performer in surprising yet satisfying ways.

In what follows, then, I wish to draw out from these examples a common emphasis on the work of self-presentation. In each stage of the account of Pelagia, for instance, her extraordinary industry stands out, signaled differently by the jewelry of the prostitute and the emaciated visage of the monk.¹⁵ When death comes and the monks discover a female body, it is the “wonder” of Pelagia’s extreme makeover—the force with which she threw herself into the role—not the duplicity of her cross-dressing that impresses the audience. Favorinus likewise leaves it all on stage to the same electrifying effect, as Polemo grudgingly acknowledges.¹⁶ So too the book of Revelation

¹⁴ See Brent D. Shaw’s remark on the “progressive loosening of rigid gender categories from their anchoring in the social hierarchies of the *polis*” (“Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs,” *J ECS* [1996]: 269–312 [287]).

¹⁵ See Tertullian’s exhortation to modesty in dress and appearance in the two books (the second is an expansion of the first) entitled *The Apparel of Women*: “For where God is there is modesty, where modesty is there is dignity, its assistant and companion” (2.8.3; translation from R. Arbesmann, E. J. Daly and E. A. Quain, trans., *Tertullian: Disciplinary, Moral and Ascetical Works* [FC 40; New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1959], 117–49). Note that Tertullian addresses himself to men as well as women: “the male sex also has its own peculiar trickeries for enhancing their appearance,” including, “disguising the down on the whole body with some female ointments” (2.8.3). Here we find the present proposal confirmed in the persistent emphasis on the labor of appearance: for example, “What profit, again, do you derive for your salvation from all the labor spent in arranging your hair?” (2.7.1). The glory of the Christian body comes “only after it has endured torture for Christ’s sake in order that the spirit may be crowned in the flesh rather than that the flesh may attract the eyes and sighs of a young man” (2.3.3).

¹⁶ I concede that there is a danger of ignoring important differences in each story’s milieu. Long before this version of Pelagia’s story was written and circulated, Christians had begun to retool the Roman Empire of Favorinus and Polemo, although Gleason (*Making Men*) implies a parallel of Roman and Christian empires. See Virginia Burrus’s astute commentary: “Indeed, Gleason hints that the ‘temporal security provided by the church’ partly reduplicated ‘the immense security of the *Pax Romana*’ that afforded local aristocrats the luxury of challenging each other’s very manhood” (“*Begotten, Not Made*”: *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* [Figurae; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000], 20). However one decides whether the figures in question point to a moment of extreme confidence or crisis in masculinity, these examples share a common emphasis on the public performance of gender in antiquity, which is the focus of this essay.

emphasizes the relationship between public performance and thronging spectators. I shall first consider the prostitute Babylon and then, mediated by the figure of the Roman gladiator, gaze upon the Lamb.¹⁷

BABYLON: AN ACT WORN THIN

Like Pelagia's appearance, the apocalyptic story of Babylon, "the great prostitute seated on many waters" (Rev 17:1–18:24), expresses a biblicalized design.¹⁸ Three chapters prior to the account of the city's fiery demise, an angel announces, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" (18:2; cf. 16:19). In this proleptic passage, the book borrows Isaiah's prophetic cry (Isa 21:9) and thereby casts the object of divine wrath, here the city of Rome, as the historical enemy of Israel's past, inviting the audience to forget the Rome they know from the cult shrines and monuments of Roman Asia Minor.¹⁹ The book instead cloaks the Roman Empire in an ancient costume, thus creating a writhing, drunken version of the great *πολίς* (Rev 18:2, 6).

¹⁷ The following discussion overlaps with some aspects of my recent monograph, Chris Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire: Monsters, Martyrs, and the Book of Revelation* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), esp. 64–88, 103–7. In addition, the approach taken here has been informed by two recent dissertations: L. Stephanie Cobb, "Dying To Be Men: The Function of Gendered Language in Early Christian Martyrologies" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2003); and Mary Hope Griffin, "Martyrdom as a Second Baptism: Issues and Expectations for the Early Christian Martyrs" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2002). I have also been helped by Virginia Burrus, "Torture and Travail: Producing the Christian Martyr," in *A Feminist Companion to the Patristic Period* (ed. A.-J. Levine with M. Blickenstaff; FCNTECW; New York: T&T Clark International and Cleveland: Pilgrim, forthcoming).

¹⁸ Robert M. Royalty, Jr., points out that "Revelation 18 sounds like 'biblical' language because it is just that—phrases, words, and images taken from the Hebrew scriptures and crafted into a new, highly rhetorical *psogos* or invective against Babylon" (*The Streets of Heaven: The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* [Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998], 196).

¹⁹ For a technical discussion of the identification of Rome with Babylon, see C.-H. Hunzinger, "Babylon als Deckname für Rom und die Datierung des I. Petrusbriefes," in *Gottes Wort und Gottes Land: Hans-Wilhelm Hertzberg zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. H. G. Reventlow; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 67–77. Revelation, 4 *Ezra*, 2 *Baruch*, 1 Peter and the *Sibylline Oracles* establish a discursive "Babylon" as a key component in an "endless exhibition" of Jewish apocalyptic historiography. On Rome and Babylon, see Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 177–209. Also see Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Political Perspective of the Revelation to John," *JBL* 96 (1977): 241–56.

Because scholars have so energetically parsed the ways in which Babylon would have been repugnant to John's early Christian audience, the enthrallment of some spectators in the narrative has often been overlooked.²⁰ The various groups that lament the destruction of Babylon suggest that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Babylon is "the great whore" (17:1) to John's angelic guide, but to the "kings of the earth" Babylon is "the great city, the mighty city!" (18:10). "What city was like the great city?" cry the shipmasters and sailors, "where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!" (18:19). Babylon's appearance astounds the seer himself: "When I saw her, I was greatly amazed" (17:6). "The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet," John reports, "and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls" (17:4), not to mention the accompanying priceless cargo of "gold, silver, jewels and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory" and so forth (18:11). We should not ignore the complaints embedded in these descriptions: after all, the cargo includes "human lives," and the bejeweled Babylon holds a "golden cup of abominations" and rides a beast. But Babylon is not only repulsive, she is also grotesque—at once abhorrent *and* seductive, which may explain why John cannot take his eyes off of her; neither can the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth or the shipmasters and sailors: they adore Babylon, for aesthetic as well as commercial reasons.²¹ As the angel announces, "The sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more . . . and the light of a lamp will shine

²⁰ For a careful examination of "the case against the empire" built in Revelation, especially in the course of the judgment of Babylon, see Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 204–9. Cf. Paul Duff, *Who Rides the Beast? Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), who likewise attends to the significance of empire but focuses on the activities of Jezebel. Feminist readings that underscore empire include the following: Jean K. Kim, "'Uncovering Her Wickedness': An Inter(con)textual Reading of Revelation 17 from a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective," *JSNT* 73 (1999): 61–81; and Caroline Vander Stichele, "Just a Whore: The Annihilation of Babylon according to Revelation 17:16," *lectio difficilior* 1 (2000): No pages; online: http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/00_1/j.htm. The latter piece both extends aspects of Kim's proposal and offers a critical assessment of other feminist interpretations of Revelation's Babylon.

²¹ The wealth of these spectators has received much comment; see Royalty, *Streets of Heaven*, 188. J. Nelson Kraybill argues (improbably so) that merchants were part of a coercive, imperial cult environment in Asia Minor (*Imperial Cult and Commerce in the Book of Revelation* [JSNTSup 132; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996]; cf. Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 201–4).

in you no more; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more" (18:21–23). Here the splendor of Roman civilization is evoked, admired, longed for and now, maintains the book of Revelation, also damned. Moreover, the luxury of the place represents no more than the trappings of prostitution, a decadence that both attracts and underwrites the prosperity of others.

The story of Pelagia throws into relief an additional critique of Babylon. In that story, the ruse of ascetic manliness is so authentic, so convincing, that it earns Pelagia a saintly reputation. This is not so for Babylon, however: "for all nations were deceived by your sorcery" (18:23). Commentators rightly note that sorcery is aligned with idolatry elsewhere in the book of Revelation (as it is in the biblical prophets), but this does not exhaust the significance of Babylon's mendacity.²² To indict a prostitute for deception sounds like a tautology; this allegation may only be a re-inscription of harlotry. I contend, however, that the accusation expresses, in an inchoate fashion, the inverse of Nonnus's praise of Pelagia's painstaking beauty. Pelagia is well put together; by contrast, not only is Rome a whore, she is not very good at it: unable to lure customers by her own abilities, she must resort to sorcery to attract and retain clients.²³ John does not dispute the efficacy of Rome's magic; rather, he attacks it. As David Aune observes, "The mention of magical spells at this point suggests that the power and success of Rome in conquering and dominating the Mediterranean world . . . was such that it could only be attributed to magic."²⁴ Polemo likewise accused Favorinus of using magic.²⁵ How else could a jealous rival explain the triumph of an

²² Cf. "The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries (φάρμακον) or their fornication or their thefts" (Rev 9:20–21).

²³ This is a shrill accusation, to be sure, but one that may have found purchase with Greeks who resented Roman dominance but usually expressed discontent in more subtle ways; see Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity, and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 116–43.

²⁴ David E. Aune, *Revelation* (3 vols.; WBC 52a–c; Nashville: Nelson, 1997–1998), 3:1010. Cf. Rev 18:3, where the behavior of the nations is ascribed to drunkenness.

²⁵ See Gleason, *Making Men*, 7, 129–30. For a brief survey that highlights the place of accusations of magic in ancient religious discourse, see Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Also see Kimberly Stratton's essay in this volume.

opponent? In both cases these denunciations not only point up softness but also imply that a dubious shortcut—sorcery—has been followed in place of the hard work of self-presentation. The charge of deception has less to do with the end of gendered appearance than with the means of achieving that end.

The judgment of Babylon goes one step further, embellishing the account of Babylon's fall with the reaction of her erstwhile fans. In one panel Babylon's former partners—the "kings of the earth," the "merchants of the earth," the "shipmasters and seafarers"—appear sequentially. Each group, John observes, stand "far off" (ἀπὸ μακρόθεν), keeping a cowardly distance from the conflagration, both lamenting their loss and intoning mocking reminders of the city's former strength. In a preview of awful things to come, an *angelus interpres* predicts that "the ten horns" of the seven-headed beast, a maddening crowd of ten client rulers and the beast itself will consume Babylon's naked flesh (Rev 17:16). Babylon's act has worn thin and her most intimate partners finally stop the show, their rhythmic cries of "Babylon the great!" dripping with sarcasm, adding insult to injury.²⁶ Now Rome is renowned for its unsurpassed achievements in wealth, craft, art and sophistication, but a day will come when she will no longer be able to wear it well and the crowds that once adored her will instead jeer and heckle the diva, whose glory days have come and gone.

ACT LIKE YOU MEAN IT

It would be possible to say that none of this is new. Harlotry, sorcery and deception appear regularly as themes in the biblical prophets, themes used against both outsiders and Israel.²⁷ A disapproving audience is on hand: Nahum's oracle against Nineveh proclaims, "Then all who see you will shrink from you" (3:6), while Ezekiel's denunciation of Tyre includes the vow that "the merchants among the

²⁶ On the dirges given by "Rome's friends" in Rev 18, Adela Yarbro Collins remarks: "On the surface they express mourning. But when they function on another level to announce judgment . . . the dirge takes on a paradoxical or ironic character" (*Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984], 121).

²⁷ Cf. Isa 23–24; 40; and Jer 50–51. For a recent survey of "fornication" and related topics in the prophets, see Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (HCS 40; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 160–89.

peoples will hiss at you" (27:36; cf. 23:26–29). Still, the sustained attention given to spectators in the book of Revelation betrays a pre-occupation with the relation of viewers to what is viewed that resonates with other synchronic cultural developments.²⁸ Shadi Bartsch's investigation of "theatricality" under the Roman Empire provides a useful framework for exploring this dynamic relationship, in which "all the world's a stage." According to Bartsch, Nero's reign was a formative moment in Roman imperial culture, exposing the "permeability" of the line between "stage and life."²⁹ When the emperor himself took the stage to play music or to act out tragedy, the audience felt new pressures: no longer (if they ever had been) passive spectators, they became "actors in the audience," obliged to applaud the emperor's thespian adventures.

The Roman Empire's "spectacles of death"³⁰ illustrate both the permeability of stage and life and the dynamic role of the audience. For example, as Kathleen Coleman's penetrating essay on the "fatal charades" of Roman capital punishment details, public punishments were often dressed up in mythological garb.³¹ While there existed a variety of ways for convicts to die, the most striking accounts drew on Greek or Roman myths. To cite one example, following Tertullian's observation that pagans provided "plots and themes" for their capital punishments, Coleman sought out the reality behind Martial's line, "When you are being torn apart like this, Daedalus, by a Lucanian bear, how would you wish you had your wings now!"³² Coleman argues that Martial and his fellow spectators observed an

²⁸ While appropriating the imagery of the biblical prophets, the Apocalypse also participates in the *intensification* of a discourse of spectacle under the Roman Empire. On viewing and being viewed under Rome, see Frilingos, *Spectacles of Empire*, 14–38. This is perhaps analogous to Michel Foucault's argument regarding the pervasive "incitement to talk about sex" in post-Enlightenment Europe (*The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* [trans. R. Hurley; New York: Vintage, 1980], esp. 17–35 [23]).

²⁹ Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Revealing Antiquity; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 38. Bartsch credits three works in particular for developing this model: Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Ervin Goffman, *Strategic Interaction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969); and Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

³⁰ This is Donald Kyle's apt phrase in *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

³¹ Kathleen M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73.

³² Martial, *Spec.* 8; cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 15.4–5.

execution in which a criminal, "Daedalus," was hung in the arena by a crane and then released, only to be mauled by a bear.³³ Bartsch, expanding on Coleman's work, argues that the "audience in the second half of the first century found the idea that theater and death could merge in the amphitheater a singularly congenial topic and chose to conceive of what took place on these occasions in those terms."³⁴ In a society resigned to the banality of death, these charades presented a metamorphosis: executions were opportunities for the "actors" to forfeit their lives for the sake of art.³⁵

Gladiatorial combat, a particularly Roman form of art, put gender into the center of this cultural matrix. For Carlin Barton, the popularity of the gladiator signals a tectonic shift in Roman culture: with the arrival of autocracy, customary agonistic interactions were made obsolete: "The Roman aristocrat had been able to compete for honor, glory, and *dignitas* while there had existed the possibility of a relative equality of means and power between himself and the other members of his class."³⁶ The constituent elements of Roman *virtus*, in other words, used to be acquired in a contest between equals. But under the crushing weight of Augustus's ascension, Barton observes, "one was compelled to elevate oneself by prostration, by kissing feet and other extremities."³⁷ Securing manliness, honor and glory had once been a matter of open battle; now, under the Principate, it was reduced to strategic acts of dissemblance and sycophancy.³⁸

Barton's proposal, together with the framework of theatricality, provides a background against which to locate other aspects of the Roman arena. If one theme emerges regularly in elite commentary on the games, it is the *volition* of the participants, a feature assessed differently and perceptively by both Barton and Erik Gunderson. Self-determination, according to Barton, was measured in part by

³³ Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 63. Also see the interpretation by W. O. Moeller, "Juvenal and Martial *De Spectaculis* 8," *CJ* 62 (1967): 369–70.

³⁴ Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, 54. Also see Keith R. Bradley, "The Significance of the *Spectacula* in Suetonius' *Caesares*," *Rivista Storica dell'Antichità* 11 (1981): 129–37.

³⁵ See Coleman, "Fatal Charades," 63, 73.

³⁶ Carlin A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ For criticism of Barton's thesis, see, for example, Katherine Welch, Review of Carlin Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiator and the Monster*, *Journal of Social History* 27 (1993): 430–33.

the “ability to maintain eye contact.”³⁹ Gunderson similarly focuses on volition, shifting the focus, however, from actual gladiators to the ideal gladiators that turn up in a surprising number of elite sources.⁴⁰ If real gladiators were debased men, drawn from servile ranks, motivated by money or worse, ideal gladiators—“fierce and loyal to authority, eager to display their prowess”—could nevertheless serve the purposes of Romans such as Cicero, Seneca and Livy.⁴¹ These idealized types stressed the gladiator’s training and his willingness to fight. Just as the gaunt face of the monk Pelagia is an outward sign of the toil of her transformation, so an unflinching stare was viewed as a product of the gladiator’s hard work, especially in conquering his own fear. Both face and stare represented a kind of ornamentation and both were valued highly by the respective audiences.

Yet Barton missteps in her sanguine estimation of the self-determination of actual gladiators; Gunderson points us instead to the more plausible conclusion that the rhetoric of the ideal had “begun to carve out an acceptable space for the gladiator.”⁴² So much so, it seems, that the expectation of “voluntarism” seeped over into all the events of the arena, including the execution of criminals. “Kill him! Lash him! Burn him! Why does he meet the sword in so cowardly a way . . . Whip him so that he will accept his wounds!” (Seneca, *Ep.* 7.5). Thus Seneca conveys the dissatisfied cries of a crowd as condemned criminals faced off, gladiator-style, against each other. The demand is not for the fighter to “Be a man!” or that he ought to “Take it like a man!”; rather, the audience screams, “Act like you mean it!” No less than the fatal charades, executions of this sort were show business. Good gladiators, adorned with a steady gaze and a will to fight, played the part well; others were expected to do the same.

It was in this environment that Jews and Christians formulated their own calculus of self-determination, especially in their elaborate accounts of martyrs. In these stories gruesome tortures are eagerly encountered, even provoked. Torn apart, limb by limb, the seven

³⁹ Carlin A. Barton, “Savage Miracles: The Redemption of Lost Honor in Roman Society and the Sacrament of the Gladiator and the Monster,” *Representations* 45 (1994): 41–71 (48).

⁴⁰ Erik Gunderson, “The Ideology of the Arena,” *CA* 15 (1996): 113–51, esp. 136–42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 139.

Jewish brothers of *4 Maccabees* endure the wheel and worse, yet they still manage to taunt their opponents with name-calling. Similarly, the Christian Blandina of the *Martyrs of Lyons* exhausts her tormenters. Unlike the fighters derided by Seneca's crowds, these characters do not need to be whipped in order to accept their wounds.

If an abused body had always been a shameful body, this conception was changing under the Roman emperors. As Brent Shaw has suggested, this valorization of "the passive value of merely being able to endure" reflected "a moral revolution of sorts."⁴³ This was not a revolution from without; the world of the arena is simultaneously admitting onto its sandy floors figures whose appearance—their wounds, their scars, their servility—signaled submission.⁴⁴ And above this fray echoed the palliating roar of the crowd. All of the stories we have examined incorporate this trade in public acclaim, a cultural asset either acquired in exchange for the exhausting (sometimes fatal) labor of self-fashioning or lost if the audience suspected that something other than discipline was behind the show. In these examples, then, the work of gender trumps the classical coding of gender, binding the story of Pelagia to the story of Favorinus, of Favorinus to the Roman gladiator, of the gladiator to the martyr, and the stories of all of these figures to our final subject, the Lamb of Revelation.

WEARING IT WELL

By way of conclusion, I return briefly to the book of Revelation. Surrounded by Pelagia, Favorinus and the Roman gladiator, the Lamb, "standing as if slain," now appears familiarly grotesque.⁴⁵ Gauged against the hyper-masculinity of Polemo and the penetration grid, the Lamb falls well short of manliness, especially in its first appearance (Rev 5), where I will focus my attention. It slouches into

⁴³ Shaw, "Body/Power/Identity," 279. Also see Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995), esp. 15–40.

⁴⁴ On the multivalence of wounds, see Jennifer A. Glancy, "Boasting of Beatings (2 Corinthians 11:23–25)," *JBL* 123 (2004): 99–135. Cf. Matthew Leigh, "Wounding and Popular Rhetoric at Rome," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 40 (1995): 195–215.

⁴⁵ See Tina Pippin, *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London: Routledge, 1999), who consistently labels the leading characters of Revelation as "monsters."

the heavenly throne room, still bearing the marks of execution. The text later refers directly to the crucifixion (11:8), but prior to this scene we encounter only an oblique reference to the death of Jesus in the introductory pastiche of images from Daniel and Zechariah: "Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him" (1:7; cf. Dan 7:13 and Zech 12:10–12). Back in the throne room, the songs refer to the "slaughter of the Lamb" (5:9, 12) and to the blood that flowed from its wounds. The Lamb thus seems to embody humiliation and defeat.

Yet readers know that this is not the whole story. Like the gladiator whose efforts have garnered credibility, the Lamb "standing as if slain" exploits an apparent weakness, "turning vulnerability to advantage" through self-determination.⁴⁶ There is a long history in antiquity of the "voluntarism" of the sacrificial victim and one thinks immediately of the Christian appropriation of Isaiah's servant song: "like a sheep led to the slaughter."⁴⁷ Rather than attempt to discern volition in the notoriously complicated theme of sacrifice, I wish to highlight a different aspect of the Lamb's entrance.⁴⁸ One of the heavenly elders hails the approaching Messiah as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (5:5): these are unambiguously masculine, even phallic images. But from the shadows emerges the broken Lamb. In like a lion, out like a lamb: the figure is utterly transformed, and the crowd loves it.⁴⁹ The Lamb's appearance in the throne room sets off a celebration of cosmic proportions: elders kneel, an angelic choir, numbering "myriads of myriads," bursts into song and, finally, "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth" offers a hymn of praise (5:11–14). The songs express, in

⁴⁶ Burrus, "*Begotten, Not Made*," 21.

⁴⁷ Cf. σφαγή in the LXX of Isa 53:7. The beast is also slain (Rev 13:3), but here the sacrificial metaphor seems absent.

⁴⁸ See Aune, *Revelation*, 1:367–73.

⁴⁹ G. K. Beale reaches the conclusion that the juxtaposition of lion and lamb indicates that "John is attempting to emphasize that it was in an ironic manner that Jesus began to fulfill the OT prophecies and reign" (*The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 353). This does not fully explain the place of the manly messiahs elsewhere in the book, except to suggest that they "finish the job" or that their presence sharpens the irony. My own reading proposes that these manly messiahs, along with the image of the "Lion of Judah," focus attention on the astounding change of persona that the Lamb has achieved. It should be noted that the Lamb is never entirely submissive or passive in the narrative; see especially Rev 14:9–10 and 17:14, as well as the references to "the throne of God and the Lamb" in 22:1, 3 (cf. 7:17).

different ways, the value of the Lamb's suffering: "You are worthy . . . for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation" (5:9). The intensity of the role, the fortitude, impresses the audience, even as other messianic characters—the "son of man" and the rider of the white horse—carry out the bulk of the apocalyptic vengeance on the earth. These figures remind us that the Lamb has not suddenly become a paragon of masculinity; if anything, the gender of the Lamb remains deeply ambiguous throughout the narrative precisely because it shares the stage with two far more manly messiahs. Yet the Lamb has something they lack: the roar of the crowd, the rapt attention and adulation of an audience unlike any other, composed of "the one seated on the throne" and his heavenly courtiers.

The Lamb, like each one of the characters we have encountered, posed difficulties for the traditional grid of gender coding, yet it was adorned with such perfect artifice that the crowds called out in admiration: "You are worthy! You wear it well." The prominence of these figures under Rome brings to mind a key theme of postcolonial scholarship: the more the agents of empire endeavor to imprint their own values on subjugated populations, the more the gaps will appear in the façade of imperial order and hegemony, since the colonized will only ever be an imperfect replica of the idealized self of the colonizer.⁵⁰ The masculinity of the expansive Roman Empire, built on models stretching back to the classical age, was caught up in this ambivalence. Scholars commonly note the conflicted character of Roman identity: the "softness" (*mollitia*) of the conquered Greeks remained a ubiquitous theme of Roman self-definition, even as the same discourse admitted the superiority of Hellenic art and philosophy.⁵¹

In this essay, I have considered extreme examples of ambivalence and hybridity; the figures represent mimicry, not mimesis. The force of this mimicry, unsettling on its own, was amplified by an irony, for it was an ancient commonplace that hardness took hard work and this sentiment made the proliferation of such monsters possible.

⁵⁰ A powerful statement on the "ambivalence of hybridity" in the colonial context can be found in Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 162–65.

⁵¹ See Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 95; and Woolf, "Becoming Roman," 125. See further Davina Lopez's essay in this volume.

“Manliness was not a birthright,” Gleason reminds us.⁵² It was work; in a society of spectacle, moreover, it meant work performed before an audience. As the Roman Empire grew larger and older, an increasing number of spectators were prepared to honor the “dissolute” Favorinus, the penetrated flesh of the gladiator, even the slumped body of the Lamb, because, like Nonnus watching Pelagia, they were able to see the value of the labor behind such exquisite softness. Under an empire in which the stakes of any performance were high, in which the line between stage and life was permeable, many crowds could appreciate the strain of grotesque self-presentation, even if (maybe even especially if) it was all an act.

⁵² Gleason, *Making Men*, 159.

“HE SHALL NOT LOOK AT A WOMAN”: GENDER IN THE HEKHALOT LITERATURE

Rebecca Lesses

The Hekhalot literature (from the Hebrew word *hekhal*, meaning “palace” or “temple”) is concerned with how people can, while in a trance, journey through the celestial world of the seven *hekhalot* to the Merkabah (the divine chariot-throne, first described in Ezekiel’s vision in Ezek 1), attain the vision of God and participate in the angelic praise of the deity. In addition, the texts describe how people can adjure angels to descend to earth in order to reveal divine mysteries of the Torah. The Hekhalot texts, extant in medieval Hebrew manuscripts, were compiled in the Jewish communities of Palestine and Babylonia in the sixth and seventh centuries C.E., at about the same time as the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud. The texts include elements going back to the third through fourth centuries C.E., however, and editing continued through the tenth to eleventh centuries.¹ Unlike many Christian mystical works, the Hekhalot texts do not provide personal accounts of mystical experiences, but rather are pseudepigraphic narrative descriptions of mystical activities and directions on how to engage in those activities. The Hekhalot texts present themselves as the works of important sages from first- and second-century C.E. Palestine—R. Nehuniah b. HaQanah, R. Eliezer the Great, R. Akiba and R. Ishmael. They were probably not the authors, even though the Babylonian Talmud associates Akiba and Ishmael with mystical activity.² Hekhalot mysticism is usually considered the first stage in the history of Jewish mysticism and Hekhalot

¹ For this dating, see Rebecca Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (HTS 44; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 6–10.

² See, for example, the story of the four sages (among them R. Akiba) who entered the *Pardes* in *b. Hag.* 15a and the account in *b. Ber.* 7a of R. Ishmael’s entrance into the Holy of Holies in the temple. For opposing views on the question of the relationship of Merkabah mysticism to rabbinic Judaism, see Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (2d ed.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965), 9–13, who believes that Merkabah mysticism grew up in the heart of the rabbinic movement; and Peter

images and motifs contributed to the development of medieval Jewish mysticism (e.g., the Kabbalah).³

The Hekhalot literature contains many ascetic prescriptions that the mystic must follow in order to invoke angels or to enter the *hekhalot*, many of which imply that the world of the Merkabah was a male-only sphere.⁴ The male adepts must avoid any contact with women, including not looking at women and not eating food prepared by females. A distant contact with menstrual impurity suffices to recall R. Neḥuniah b. Ha-Qanah from his Hekhalot vision. The Hekhalot texts nowhere countenance the possibility that a woman could participate in the mystical activities and visions described in them.⁵ This is a male-only world and women are mentioned only as possible threats to the sexual or ritual purity of the male practitioners. In this essay I examine the Hekhalot requirements of ritual and sexual purity that prohibited the male mystic's contact with women, as well as the concomitant assumption in the Hekhalot texts that only men can engage in mystical practices. My goal is to answer

Schäfer, "The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism," in *Hekhalot-Studien* (TSAJ 19; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 277–95, who sees Merkabah mysticism as a post-rabbinic phenomenon.

³ Cf. Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1941).

⁴ For the texts of the Hekhalot literature, see Peter Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981); and idem, ed., *Geniza Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984). Important discussions of the Hekhalot literature include the following: Scholem, *Major Trends*; idem, *Jewish Gnosticism*; Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (AGJU 16; Leiden: Brill, 1980); idem, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988); David J. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ 16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988); Naomi Janowitz, *The Poetics of Ascent* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 1989); Michael Swartz, *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); idem, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Joseph Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* (Tel Aviv: MOD, 1993); Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*; James Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature* (JSJSup 70; Leiden: Brill, 2001); and Rachel Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004).

⁵ Davila argues, however, that one short passage in the Hekhalot texts leaves open the possibility of a woman having a visionary revelation—of the angel Panyon (*Descenders to the Chariot*, 279–81): "All who see him—whether young man or virgin girl, whether youth or elder, whether man or woman, whether gentile or Israelite, whether slave or maidservant—run to meet him and they love him for his welfare and they run to do him a favor and rejoice in provision for him, whether or not he returns the favor" (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §420; translation is from Davila; unless otherwise noted, translations of ancient texts are my own).

the following question: Why were there no female Hekhalot mystics and why was the visionary experience "gendered male" in the Hekhalot literature?

In this examination of the Hekhalot literature, I use gender as a category of analysis.⁶ This is accomplished, first of all, through a detailed investigation of the mechanisms of exclusion within the texts, followed by an examination of biblical and rabbinic writings that bear on the Hekhalot texts and that reveal both contradictions or at least predecessors to these exclusions. Part of this task will be accomplished through highlighting contrasts and comparisons with the evidence for early Christian and Muslim women ascetics and mystics, including other early Jewish texts that do hint at the existence of Jewish women mystics. In order to identify the androcentric ideology of Jewish mystical texts, my analysis operates from an explicitly feminist perspective, drawing on the work of numerous feminist scholars of Judaism and biblical studies, among them Judith Plaskow, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Bernadette Brooten, Tal Ilan and Judith Baskin.⁷ Judith Plaskow articulates the approach to the ancient texts taken in this essay in her book *Standing Again at Sinai*, where she argues that a feminist approach to Jewish history must make use of the practice of modern historical writing described by Yosef Yerushalmi, which "brings to the fore texts, events, processes, that never really became part of Jewish group memory."⁸ According to Plaskow, this modern practice "challenges and relativizes those memories that have survived."⁹ She further argues that "it is essentially the purpose of the feminist historian to challenge tradition in the way [Yerushalmi] describes. Surfacing forgotten processes and events, nameless persons and discarded sources, the feminist calls Jewish memory to the bar, accusing it of partiality and distortion, of defining Jewish women out of the Jewish past."¹⁰ The first part of my task, therefore, is to begin

⁶ For an influential definition of gender and its relation to history, see Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 28–50.

⁷ See Judith R. Baskin, *Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature* (Hanover: University Press of New England and Brandeis University Press, 2002), 6–8.

⁸ Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 94.

⁹ Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

simply by asking questions that have long been ignored and not even thought of, such as why are there no women in the Hekhalot texts? What are the mechanisms of exclusion in these texts? How do these texts operate in order to make it seem natural—even inevitable—that no women are mentioned?

Gabrielle Spiegel provides a useful formulation of the deconstructive analysis of language that I used to analyze the gaps in Hekhalot literature, stating that

... deconstructive strategies ... have proven to be powerful tools of analysis in uncovering and dismantling the ways in which texts perform elaborate ideological mystifications of which it is proper to be suspicious and which texts themselves inevitably betray through their fracturing of meaning, once we have learned to read them deconstructively. Even more so has deconstruction taught us to heed the silences within language, to search out the unsaid as well as the spoken, and to understand the constitutive force of silence in shaping the texts we read.¹¹

This approach to language is useful for reading the absences—in particular, the absence of women—in the Hekhalot literature. Schüssler Fiorenza offers another, explicitly feminist formulation of this approach, calling it a “hermeneutics of suspicion,”¹² which “seeks to explore the liberating or oppressive values and visions inscribed in the text by identifying the androcentric-patriarchal character and dynamics of the text and its interpretations.”¹³ Schüssler Fiorenza’s critical feminist hermeneutics “is not limited to canonical texts but can equally be applied to extracanonical sources and traditions,”¹⁴ thereby making

¹¹ Gabrielle Spiegel, “History and Post-Modernism: IV,” *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 194–208 (204).

¹² A hermeneutics of suspicion “invites readers to investigate biblical texts and traditions as one would ‘search’ the place and location where a crime has been committed. It approaches the canonical text as a ‘cover-up’ for patriarchal murder and oppression. It seeks to identify the crime by carefully tracing its clues and imprints in the texts in order to prevent further hurt and violations” (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Transforming the Legacy of The Woman’s Bible,” in *Searching the Scriptures* (ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza with A. Brock and S. Matthews; 2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993–1994), 1:11–24 [11]). Particularly important about Schüssler Fiorenza’s position is that she writes from an explicitly feminist and political standpoint; she is not just trying to work out a philosophically sound perspective from which to interpret biblical texts.

¹³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1993) 57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

it applicable to Jewish texts outside of (although in some way also dependent upon) the rabbinic canon of Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash. Even though women are not the center of the Hekhalot literature (and in fact this literature hardly ever refers to them explicitly), in this essay I seek to make women the center of my reading of the Hekhalot literature, if only to reveal how absent they actually are.¹⁵

Another aspect of the task of feminist historiography is to detect what Schüssler Fiorenza calls the "slippages" in androcentric texts that reveal women's presence and agency.¹⁶ This search for "slippage" allows us to ask whether there may not have been other forms of early Jewish mysticism in which women were involved. Ilan's approach to rabbinic literature, which is similar in some ways to Schüssler Fiorenza's (although she does not have the same theological agenda), entails a search within the nooks and crannies of rabbinic literature both to discover how the authors constructed women and to find real women amid these representations.¹⁷ This also forms part of my method in examining other early Jewish texts (such as the *Testament of Job* or *Joseph and Aseneth*) for evidence of the possibility of Jewish women mystics.

¹⁵ Elliot Wolfson's recent book, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), came into my hands too late to consider fully in this essay, but it provides many useful insights for understanding the androcentric nature of the Hekhalot literature.

¹⁶ Joan E. Taylor describes one feminist goal of Schüssler Fiorenza's scholarship with these words: "Among many hermeneutical strategies, Schüssler Fiorenza identifies 'slippages,' which are small kernels of reality indicating the real-life struggle of women that are embedded in an androcentric text. These sensitize us to how early Christian women's historical reality was different from the textual construction of that reality, opening up possibilities of reconstructing their historical reality in ways that do not disempower them" ("The Women 'Priests' of Philo's *De Vita Contemplativa*: Reconstructing the Therapeutae," in *On the Cutting Edge: The Study of Women in Biblical Worlds; Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza* [ed. J. Schaberg, A. Bach and E. Fuchs; New York: Continuum, 2003], 102–22 [102]).

¹⁷ See especially Tal Ilan, *Mine and Yours Are Hers: Retrieving Women's History from Rabbinic Literature* (AGJU 41; Leiden: Brill, 1997), particularly the introductory chapter, in which she develops her methodology. She argues that "history still can be recovered from the rabbinic corpus" (35). This task is part of what I attempted to take up in my earlier article, Rebecca Lesses, "Exe(o)rcising Power: Women as Sorceresses, Exorcists, and Demonesses in Late Antique Judaism," *JAAR* 69 (2001): 343–75.

THE HEKHALOT LITERATURE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

My question regarding the male-only mysticism of the Hekhalot texts arises especially because the comparative material—from early Christianity and early Islam—attests to the presence and participation of women mystics in those traditions. Other early Jewish literature (e.g., the *Testament of Job*) may also suggest the possibility of women's involvement in visionary mysticism. Rabbinic texts occasionally refer to women's learning and piety. With the example of Beruriah, even the Babylonian Talmud seems to leave open the possibility (perhaps only to deny the reality) that a woman could be knowledgeable in the Torah (written and oral). Still, there are a number of references to women discussing Torah or halakhic questions with male authorities in that corpus.¹⁸ Why then were Jewish women's mystical experiences not recorded and their absence required from Hekhalot circles?

In terms of the parameters of this study, while not seeking to suggest any necessary historical link between Hekhalot mysticism and other traditions of mysticism, I argue that Christian and Muslim ascetic and mystical traditions can serve as a heuristic framework by which to highlight the absence of women in the Hekhalot texts, as well as to suggest possible reasons for this lack, reasons that will be explored in more detail in my analysis of several Hekhalot texts. Moreover, when comparing the Hekhalot texts to other Jewish texts, I will, however, be discussing possible historical connections or disjunctions. Further, for the purpose of this present discussion, I will limit my treatment of mysticism to visionary experiences of God or the angels because of the centrality of this kind of experience to the

¹⁸ See, for example, the following discussions of Beruriah as a scholar: Rachel Adler, "The Virgin in the Brothel and Other Anomalies: Character and Context in the Legend of Beruriah," *Tikkun* 3 (Nov.–Dec. 1988): 28–32, 102–5; Daniel Boyarin, *Canal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (New Historicism 25; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 167–96; and Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (TSAJ 44; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 197–204. On Beruriah and Matrona, see Tal Ilan, "The Quest for the Historical Beruriah, Rachel, and Imma Shalom," *AJSR* 22 (1997): 1–17; and Ilan, *Mine and Yours Are Hers*, 55–57, 68–72, 240–62, 288–89, 297–310. For a discussion of Yalta, see Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (Contraversions; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 118–27. See also the discussions in Bernadette J. Brooken, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (BJS 36; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), regarding the different leadership roles that Jewish women played in late antiquity.

Hekhalot literature.¹⁹ Such visions can be purely visual or involve some kind of communication with the heavenly source. This visionary experience can occur either spontaneously or as a result of a period of preparation, including prayer and the recitation of incantations or hymns. Finally, an important aspect of the mystical experience in the Hekhalot texts and others to which they will be compared is ascetic renunciation: of food and drink, of human companionship and of sexual contact. Ascetic conduct may be required because it makes the mystical experience possible or because it is constitutive of the mystical experience itself (i.e., part of turning towards God entails a turning away from the world).²⁰ I do not presume to make a case about whether the texts describe experiences that actually happened to anyone, but rather about how these experiences are depicted or (especially) prescribed in these texts.²¹

Early Christianity

Early Christian texts present literary expressions of women's ability to receive a revelation from angels. In Luke 1 the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her that she will have a son; in 1 Cor 11–14 Paul refers to both women and men speaking in "the tongues of angels."²² This emphasis continues in later traditions as well. For

¹⁹ See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 74–124.

²⁰ See discussion in Eliezer Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists: Fasting and Asceticism in Rabbinic Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²¹ See, for example, Scholem, *Major Trends*, 4. For other treatments of the nature of mysticism, including questions related to experience and representation, see Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); idem, ed., *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Robert K. C. Forman, ed., *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Robert S. Ellwood, *Mysticism and Religion* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980).

²² For a discussion of the 1 Corinthians passage, see Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 145–50; and Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), who states: "But most prominently, the women are known for speaking God's thoughts to the people in prophecy and responding for the people to God in prayer (11:5; 14:1–38). In both cases it is God's spirit that inspires them, drawing them—and others through them—into a divine communion that moves beyond speech into 'tongues of angels' (13:1)" (187). It is important to note here, however, the difference between the annunciation scene to Mary and people speaking in the "tongues of angels": the former depends heavily on earlier Hebrew Bible type-scenes of revelations to women that they will bear a son. See

example, Montanist female prophets were said to receive wisdom from angels.²³ Tertullian relates the following with respect to a Montanist woman: "We have now amongst us a sister whose lot it has been to be favoured with gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord's Day in the church; she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men's hearts she discerns, and she obtains directions for healing for such as need them."²⁴ According to Epiphanius, Priscilla, one of the Montanist prophets, declared, "Appearing in the form of a woman, radiantly robed, Christ came to me and implanted wisdom within me and revealed to me that this place [Pepuza] is holy, and that Jerusalem is to come down from heaven."²⁵ In both of these cases, God or the angels appeared to the women and spoke with them. The two Montanist women prophets, Priscilla and Maximilla, had apparently left their husbands and chosen to live celibate lives, a choice that is also presented as viable in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.²⁶

the discussion in Susan Niditch, *Ancient Israelite Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 39–40; and the analysis of Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), 50–51.

²³ According to Acts, Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9). Philip was one of the "seven" appointed to take care of the widows in Acts 6:5. He lived in Caesarea with his unmarried virgin daughters (παρθένοι). On the early Christian use of this reference to justify women prophesying and serving as deacons and priests, see François Bovon, "Women Priestesses in the Apocryphal Acts of Philip," in *Walk in the Ways of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza* (ed. S. Matthews, C. Kittredge and M. Johnson-Debaufre; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 109–21, esp. 118–21. For testimonies on the visions of Montanist women prophets, see Ross Shepard Kraemer, ed., *Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 262–68. Also see Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings*, 157–73; Susanna Elm, "Montanist Oracles," in Schüssler Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures*, 2:131–38; and Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁴ Tertullian, *An.* 9; translation from Kraemer, *Women's Religions*, 262.

²⁵ Epiphanius, *Medicine Box* 49.1.3; translation from Kraemer, *Women's Religions*, 266.

²⁶ Christine Trevett notes that the early reports about the two female prophets said that they had left their husbands "and had embraced a life of celibacy" ("Gender, Authority and Church History: A Case Study of Montanism," *Feminist Theology* 17 [1998]: 9–24 [16]). Moreover, as Trevett suggests, "Priscilla was accorded the title 'virgin' . . . 'Orders' of widows and sanctified virgins were evolving already, as a recognized class within churches, and possibly Priscilla was claiming to have been in a 'spiritual' (non sexual) partnership with her former husband. Not a few Christians,

This voluntary life of celibacy, chosen either before marriage or sought after marriage, and entailing leaving one's husband, often against his will, was an important aspect of the devotional life of some early Christian women. Like men, some women chose to leave the normal structure of family life in order to devote themselves wholly to a life with God, a choice that was often controversial inside and outside the church. Women participated in early Christian ascetic and monastic movements, although not without considerable opposition.²⁷ According to some scholars, the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles provide evidence for the central role, in some Christian communities, of celibate, pious Christian women who left the security and constrictions of the patriarchal family.²⁸ Stevan Davies argues that the communities with whom the apocryphal Acts originated were "continent Christian women, the widows of their church."²⁹ In a similar vein, Virginia Burrus suggests that the stories in the apocryphal Acts are "most appropriately viewed as literary adaptations of folk-stories rather than *ad hoc* creations . . . archetypes of these chastity stories were mostly likely told by women."³⁰

as early as the mid second century, were attracted to the ideal of celibacy, and 'spiritual marriage' might be part of it" (17).

²⁷ On women in the apocryphal Acts, see Ross Shepard Kraemer, "The Conversion of Women to Ascetic Forms of Christianity," *Signs* 6 (1980): 298-307. In *Her Share of the Blessings* (150-55), Kraemer discusses the appeal of the type of early Christianity evidenced in the apocryphal Acts to women who did not or could not fit into the usual female roles. Also see Stevan Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980); Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); and Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Women and Religion 23. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1987). On women in Syriac Christianity, see Sebastian Brock and Susan Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (TCH 13; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

²⁸ Davies, *Revolt of the Widows*, 32-34. As Virginia Burrus notes, "The Christian chastity story . . . is clearly *opposed* to the traditional social order, and above all to marriage and family" ("Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts," *Semeia* 38 [1986]: 101-17 [106]).

²⁹ Davies, *Revolt of the Widows*, 50, 63-64, 69-76. He also argues that the Acts were likely to have been written by educated, elite women who had chosen a continent life (95-109). Dennis MacDonald, moreover, argues that the origin of the stories in the apocryphal Acts lies in oral traditions told and spread by women (*Legend and the Apostle*, 34-53).

³⁰ Burrus, "Chastity as Autonomy," 102-3 (cf. 107: "the chastity stories seem to reflect a woman's point of view"). Cf. MacDonald, *Legend and the Apostle*, 34-53; Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy*, 53-57, 67-80; and idem, "Word and Flesh: The Bodies and Sexuality of Ascetic Women in Christian Antiquity," *JFSR* 10 (1994): 27-51 (esp. 45 n. 29). Peter Brown, on the other hand, argues that the apocryphal Acts

The women who appear in the apocryphal Acts also received visions of Christ. For instance, Drusiana, one of the heroines of the *Acts of John*, saw a vision of Christ after her husband locked her in a tomb: "The Lord appeared to me in the tomb like John and as a young man" (87).³¹ Indeed, the "Round Dance" visionary sequence of the *Acts of John* offers an "extended elucidation of Drusiana's vision of the Lord."³² According to Davies, "The community behind the Acts frequently experienced visions of Christ . . . Christ was seen as a young man, as an old man, as an apostle, as a glorious golden youth."³³ Moreover, the pious women's sexual continence is frequently connected to the idea that they are pledged in marriage to Christ. The *Acts of John* expresses such sentiment thus: "... my children, bind yourselves each one of you in an indivisible, true and holy matrimony, waiting for the one incomparable and true bridegroom from heaven, even Christ, who is a bridegroom for ever."³⁴

Early Islam

For Islam I will take as an example the early ascetic woman mystic Râbi'a al-'Adawîyah (ca. 717–801 C.E.), a prominent figure in early Sufism whose teachings are revered by later Sufis.³⁵ As with other

do not describe women's actual social roles in second- and third-century Christian communities. He observes that "[c]ontinent women play a central role in these narratives. Yet the apocryphal Acts should not be read as evidence for the actual role of women in Christianity. Rather, they reflect the manner in which Christian males of that period partook in the deeply ingrained tendency of all men in the ancient world, to use women 'to think with'" (*The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 153). Nonetheless, he also notes, "Yet we can at least know, from such evidence, what gave dedicated women so much prestige in the local churches. They were, above all, women whose lives had not been broken up by the discontinuities of marriage and childbearing" (270–71). Against this perspective, Shelly Matthews argues, in a nuanced way, that one can both focus on the *representation* of women in the apocryphal Acts and use the texts to *reconstruct* actual women's history. She writes, "the best feminist historiography pays close attention to representation in texts while still attempting to reconstruct a history of women" ("Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *JFSR* 17 [2001]: 39–55 [55]).

³¹ The translation of the *Acts of John* is taken from Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, eds., *The New Testament Apocrypha* (trans. R. McL. Wilson et al.; 2 vols.; rev. ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991–1992), 2:179.

³² Davies, *Revolt of the Widows*, 55. For the text of the "Round Dance," see Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:181–84.

³³ Davies, *Revolt of the Widows*, 117.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 83, quoting from a fragment of the *Acts of John* in Hennecke and Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:160.

³⁵ For the most complete biography, based on a variety of sources, see Margaret

figures discussed in this essay, we do not have a first-hand record of her life. Instead, the most complete description of her life and mysticism is found in the thirteenth century C.E. account by Farīd al-Dīn 'Attār.³⁶ Rābi'a's mysticism is one of utter and complete self-annihilating love of God, as illustrated by this saying, "Oh God! If I worship You in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell. And if I worship You in hope of Heaven, forbid it to me. And if I worship You for You Yourself, do not deprive me of [Your] everlasting beauty."³⁷ It is told of Rābi'a that she used to go up on her roof at night and pray, "O my Lord, the stars are shining and the eyes of men are closed, and kings have shut their doors and every lover is alone with his beloved, and here am I alone with thee."³⁸ For Rābi'a, asceticism

Smith, *Rābi'a: The Life and Work of Rābi'a and Other Women Mystics in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928; repr., Oxford: Oneworld, 1994); cf. ch. 12 (167–94), where she writes about other women ascetics and mystics in Islam. Barbara Lois Helms criticizes Smith's Christian interpretation of Sufism: "Smith has a clear a priori perspective behind her analysis, specifically that Sufism is foreign to Islam and is the direct result of Christian influences. Smith outlines her conception of the 'Sufi doctrine,' greatly emphasizing its similarity to Christian spirituality and its apparent contradiction to the teachings of orthodox Islam" ("Rābi'ah as Mystic, Muslim, and Woman," in *The Annual Review of Women in World Religions* 3 [ed. A. Sharma and K. K. Young; Albany: SUNY, 1994]:1–87 [2]). Helms, instead, follows Louis Massignon, "who constructs a quite different interpretation of Islamic mystical spirituality, tracing its root back to the Quran which he, unlike Smith, accepts as an authentic revealed Scripture" (3). According to Helms, Massignon's approach in his study, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (2d ed.; Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1954), is useful because it attends to the time and setting of Rābi'a's life, in eighth-century C.E. Basra, rather than regarding her as a transhistorical mystic. Helms stresses especially the point raised by Massignon that the "l'école ascétique de Bassrah" developed there in the first two Muslim centuries ("Rābi'ah as Mystic," 4–9).

³⁶ Smith discusses the sources for the life and mystical teachings of Rābi'a (see *Rābi'a*, 2–15). She writes, "the sources from which information is to be derived about the life and teachings of Rābi'a al 'Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya give us evidence which at the best is fragmentary and in many cases unreliable, chiefly because her biographers lived at a considerable distance of time after her death, and legend has played at least as great a part as history in the account given of the story of her life" (2). According to Smith, the earliest mention of Rābi'a is found in the ninth century C.E. She further notes that Farīd al-Dīn 'Attār (ca. 1120–1230) wrote "the most extensive and complete biography of Rābi'a" in his *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā* ("The Memoirs of the Saints"), "the oldest book in Persian dealing exclusively with the lives of the saints" (*Rābi'a*, 6–7). Despite the legendary aspects of her story, it is worthwhile to mention Rābi'a and her sister mystics in this essay because of their comparative usefulness for exploring the possibility of women mystics in first-millennium C.E. Judaism.

³⁷ Helms, "Rābi'ah," 21.

³⁸ Smith, *Rābi'a*, 47. On Rābi'a's love of God, see Annemarie Schimmel, "Women in Mystic Islam," in *Women and Islam* (a special issue of *Women's Studies International*

meant abandonment of the world and complete dependence upon God. According to Barbara Lois Helms, "Râbi'ah understood that asceticism was not a goal in itself but the means of attaining the goal of proximity to God. Furthermore, for Râbi'ah spiritual purification extended beyond abstinence from material things; it meant complete detachment from outward and secondary concerns."³⁹

Asceticism, however, was also constitutive of the mystical life of other early Muslim women mystics.⁴⁰ As Jamal Elias notes, "The early female mystics are characterized by a number of recurrent themes such as sexual abstinence (*ʿuzūba*), former slavery (*ʿubūdiyya*) and devotional acts of vigils and fasting. In addition, some of them are characterized by *karāmāt*, divine gifts bestowed on them in compensation for their abandonment of this world and its comforts. Female mystics of the early period appear by and large to have lived alone as celibates."⁴¹ Elias points to an important advantage of the sexually abstinent life for mystical women, comparable to what we find with the Montanists and especially in the apocryphal Acts. Celibacy meant that a woman did not have to take on the responsibilities of marriage and a family, leaving time for mystical practices. As Elias notes,

There could be a number of reasons for the dominance of a sexually abstinent life among female mystics. Aside from any spiritual motivations, there is a purely practical consideration: the burden placed upon women by marriage, in the form of household responsibilities and child-rearing, would leave very little time or energy for lengthy devotional

Forum 5; ed. A. al-Hibri; Oxford: Pergamon, 1982), 145–51 (147); and Amila Butorovic, "Between the Tariqa and the Shari'a: The Making of the Female Self," in *Feminist Poetics of the Sacred: Creative Suspicions* (ed. F. Devlin-Glass and L. McCredlen; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135–50 (145).

³⁹ Helms, "Râbi'ah," 18. Smith (*Râbi'a*, 40–52) also emphasizes her asceticism.

⁴⁰ Jamal J. Elias, "Female and Feminine in Islamic Mysticism," *Muslim World* 78 (1988): 209–24. This observation stands despite the statement of Schimmel that "[i]t might be difficult to find many unmarried women who pursued the Path [of Sufism]" ("Women in Mystic Islam," 150). She provides as an example Fatima of Nishapur (147), who was married to Ahmad al-Balkhi b. Khidruya (d. 854/55). Elias also gives the example of another early Sufi woman, Râbi'a bint Ismâ'il, of whom it is related that she said to her husband, also an ascetic (cf. Smith, *Râbi'a*, 171), "I do not love thee with the love of a wife, I love thee with the love of a sister, and my desire towards thee is only to serve thee" ("Female and Feminine," 210).

⁴¹ Elias, "Female and Feminine," 209. Cf. his following comment: "Although virginity and/or celibacy appear to be the norm among women mystics in early Islam, the attitude of the Sufi writers regarding celibacy is far from monolithic. The majority opinion is that a celibate life is the preferred manner of existence" (214).

exercises. Many of these early female mystics appear to have been slaves or freed slaves. Unlike free women who had to maintain family honor, freed slaves could live alone, remain unmarried, and be seen in less than modest dress . . . Extreme asceticism is a dominant characteristic of female mystics in the early period of *zuhd*.⁴²

I do not believe that this is the whole story, however. If we consider the sayings of Râbi'a, celibacy and a lack of care for the world go along with her exclusive focus on the love of God. A celibate life indeed gave her the opportunity to seek God without encumbrances, but she appears to value the ascetic life because it meant that she could be alone with God.

Despite the esteem in which Râbi'a was held by later Sufis, women Sufis were not universally valued by their male counterparts.⁴³ Elias suggests that "asceticism and celibacy were more prevalent among female than male mystics" because of the "notion in Sufi teachings that women are inferior to men in spiritual capacity."⁴⁴ He interprets women's asceticism as a denial of their sexuality and an attempt to become like men: "Excessive ascetic exercises in the form of starvation and sleep-deprivation can cause amenorrhea, or halting of the menstrual cycle. This may have been a desired goal for female ascetics, because menstruation is the most tangible justification used in Islamic thought and society to assign an inferior role to women. By ridding themselves of menstruation, they essentially rid themselves of the signs of women's categoric spiritual inferiority to men."⁴⁵ This is a possible reason why asceticism prevailed among female mystics,

⁴² Ibid., 210.

⁴³ Heidi Ford details the ways that later Muslim mystical writers denigrated Râbi'a's mysticism, although she also became one of the most beloved mystical figures in later devotion ("Hierarchical Inversions, Divine Subversions: The Miracles of Râbi'a al-'Adawîya," *JFSR* 15 [1999]: 5–24). Schimmel further notes: "To be sure, early Islamic asceticism and the mystical writings based on these ascetic ideals were as inimical to women as is any ascetic movement in the world of religion, be it medieval Christianity or early Buddhism" ("Women in Mystic Islam," 146). She also notes that the Sufis "had to acknowledge, though grudgingly, that some exceptional women were able to reach the lofty stage of a 'Man of God'" (146).

⁴⁴ Elias, "Female and Feminine," 211.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 211. This attempt to become "like men" can also be found in early Christian sources. The last logion in the *Gospel of Thomas* reads: "Simon Peter said to them, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' Jesus said, 'I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she may too become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven'" (114; translation taken from James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [3d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1988], 138).

but it seems to me that it is not the only one, because it goes counter to the positive value of asceticism for Râbî'a and other women mystics (in Islam and Christianity). Asceticism does not necessarily make them like men, but permits them to seek the spiritual goal of closeness to God (as asceticism also does for men). Elias's remark is significant for the comparison with early Jewish mysticism, however, because, as we will see, the connection of women to the impurity of menstruation played a large role in excluding women from the circles of Hekhalot mystics.

Early Jewish Literature

Given earlier literary representations of women's visions of God and the angels in biblical and pseudepigraphic texts, which might have been expected to form an authoritative model for women in later periods seeking to attain visions of God or the angels (as Ezekiel's vision does for the Hekhalot mystics), the exclusion of females from Merkabah mysticism is curious. In several of the annunciation scenes in Genesis and Judges, God or an angel addresses a woman directly and tells her that she will have a longed-for child.⁴⁶ For example, Hagar is told by an angel that she will have a child, Ishmael, and she herself gives a name to "the Lord who spoke to her": 'El Ro'i or "God of Seeing" (Gen 16:13). Moreover, Rebekah "went to inquire of the Lord" when she was disturbed by the struggling of the twins in her womb and God answered her with a prophecy (Gen 25:22–23).

Rebekah's role was greatly magnified in the second-century B.C.E. book of *Jubilees*.⁴⁷ Randall Chesnutt refers to Rebekah's role in *Jubilees*

⁴⁶ Niditch refers to these theophanies as "annunciations," when God typically reveals himself directly to women, in contrast to revelations to men, which more frequently involve establishing a covenant between the man (or men) and God (*Ancient Israelite Religion*, 39–40). I am not arguing that these biblical passages describe specifically mystical encounters with angels or God, but rather that they could serve as literary models for later female encounters with angels or God in mystical contemplation, just as Isaiah 6 or Ezekiel 1 served as literary models that were enacted by the circles of the Hekhalot mystics.

⁴⁷ In *Jub.* 25.13–14, Rebekah blesses Jacob with these words: "'O Lord, bless him and place in my mouth a righteous blessing so that I might bless him.' And at that time, when a spirit of truth descended upon her mouth, she placed her two hands upon the head of Jacob" (*OTP* 2:105). In 27.1, Rebekah learns through a dream that Esau intended to murder his brother and, in 35.6, she learns through a dream of her impending death. See further Randall Chesnutt, "Revelatory Experiences Attributed to Biblical Women," in *"Women Like This": New Perspectives on Jewish Women*

as an "agent of divine revelation," who mediates "the sacred traditions that, according to Jubilees, remain normative for God's people."⁴⁸ This interpretation of Rebekah as a recipient of prophecy continues in later tradition. For instance, several times in the story of Jacob's deception of his father, in the process of acquiring the blessing intended for his brother Esau, the Targumim attribute Rebekah's foreknowledge to prophecy and to the holy spirit.⁴⁹ Two early Jewish texts written in Greek (likely in the early Roman imperial period), the *Testament of Job* and *Joseph and Aseneth*, similarly depict women as capable of heavenly visions. In the *Testament of Job*, the daughters of Job no longer attend to earthly matters, but speak in the languages of angels and send up hymns to God (46–53).⁵⁰ Likewise, in *Joseph and Aseneth*, the "commander of the host of the Most High" appears to Aseneth after she fasts and prays for seven days (15.12).

Rabbinic Literature

In contrast to the Christian, Islamic and earlier Jewish traditions, when we survey rabbinic interpretations of biblical passages that describe women speaking to God, it becomes clear that there is a strong strain of rabbinic thinking that considers virtually all women (except for Sarah, "that righteous woman") unfit to speak to God. A midrash on God's announcement to Sarah that she will have a child illustrates this point well:

R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Leazar, in the name of R. Shimon, "We have not found that God spoke with a woman, except with Sarah alone." But isn't it written, "He spoke to the woman [Eve], 'I will greatly increase?'" (Gen 3:16). R. Jacob of Kefar-Hanin said, "by means of the interpreter (*meturgeman*)."

in the *Greco-Roman World* (ed. A.-J. Levine; SBLEJL 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 107–25 (108–11); Betsy Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women in Josephus' Antiquities," *JJS* 39 (1988): 143–70; and Richard A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (ALGHJ 3; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 40–44.

⁴⁸ Chesnutt, "Revelatory Experiences," 111.

⁴⁹ See *Targum Onkelos* on Gen 27:13; and *Targum Ps.-Jonathan* on Gen 27:5 and 27:42; cf. Chesnutt, "Revelatory Experiences," 111, 120; and Peter Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur* (SANT 28; Munich: Kösel, 1972), 55–56.

⁵⁰ See Rebecca Lesses, "Commentary on the Testament of Job," in Schüssler Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures*, 2:139–49; cf. Chesnutt, "Revelatory Experiences," 115–19.

said to you [Rebekah], ‘Two nations are in your womb?’” (Gen 25:23). R. Ba b. Kahana said, “The word fell to her.” R. Biri said, “How much circling about does the Holy One desire in order to hear the speech of righteous women?”—“‘But,’ He replied, ‘You did laugh’” (Gen 18:15).⁵¹

According to this midrash, God spoke directly only to Sarah, but even then through some kind of “circling around” (perhaps referring to Sarah’s standing within the tent while God/the angels and Abraham were eating outside). God spoke to Eve through “the interpreter” and to Rebekah through some kind of “dropped word” that is not perceived to be a direct divine communication.

On the other hand, some rabbinic passages hint that women can receive revelation from God or the angels. For example, a passage on Hagar, which comes directly after a reprise of the above midrash, makes her reception of revelation far more significant:

“You are a God of seeing (ʿEl Roʿi)” (Gen 16:13). R. Aybu said, “You see the humiliation of the humbled.” For she said, “Have I even here (*halom*) seen Him Who sees me?” She said, “I have been granted not only speech [with the angel], but even with royalty too, as you read, ‘That you have brought me thus far (*halom*)’” (2 Sam 8:18). “It’s not enough that I have joined together with my mistress (when she conversed with God), but also I myself (have spoken with God).” R. Samuel said, “This can be compared to the case of the matron to whom the king said, ‘pass before me.’ She passed before him, and she was leaning on her maidservant and hiding her face. Her maidservant saw and she did not see.”⁵²

In this passage, not only Sarah but also Hagar herself directly receives revelation, although the identity of the revealer is unclear. R. Samuel also implies that Hagar looked directly at God, while Sarah modestly hid her face while passing before God, which offers an interesting interpretation of the contrast between Sarah’s presence in the tent overhearing the conversation between Abraham and God and Hagar’s direct address of the angel (who, it turns out, is actually God) in the desert, where she has fled from Sarah’s ill-treatment. It is hard to know how to evaluate this midrash; perhaps it indicates a different line of thinking about the relationship between Sarah and Hagar, which regards Hagar’s actions more highly than Sarah’s, or

⁵¹ *y. Soṭah* 7:1.21b (my translation).

⁵² *Gen. Rab.* 45.10. This translation is based in part on the one in Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah* (10 vols.; London: Soncino, 1939), 1:387–88.

it may regard Hagar's "seeing" as brazen rudeness. Even though the dominant rabbinic opinion seems to exclude women from receiving direct divine revelation, it is clear that there are still voices that leave open that possibility for certain biblical women, unlike the prescriptions of the Hekhalot rituals. On the other hand, even though the midrash leaves open the possibility for certain biblical women, that prospect does not necessarily translate into opportunities for female contemporaries of the rabbis.

Ishah Perushah

Does rabbinic literature give us a hint about the kind of woman likely to be involved in mystical contemplation and/or the type of ascetic renunciation that was often part of mystical practice in late antiquity? In the world of the rabbis would one find ascetic women who undertake practices like those of the females described in the apocryphal Acts? One enigmatic phrase in *Mishnah Sotah*, referring to "a woman who is a *perushah*," opens a tiny door into this possibility. In *m. Sotah* 3:4, R. Joshua says that "A woman has more pleasure in one *qab* [= a liquid measure; i.e., a modest existence] with lechery (*tiflut*) than in nine *qabs* [i.e., a luxurious lifestyle] with abstinence (*perishut*)."⁵³ A foolish pietist, a cunning rogue, a woman who is a *perushah* and the plague of *perushim* bring destruction upon the world." The word *perishut* in rabbinic literature is used to refer to both "mandated separation from forbidden food, ritual impurity, idolatry and heresy and forbidden sexual relations" and to "voluntary abstention from permitted activities and pleasures . . . [The root] *P.R.Š.* is used in connection with voluntary withdrawal from food, sex and ritual impurity."⁵⁴ It is generally viewed with approval by the rabbis. The term *perushim* can also refer to the Pharisees known from Josephus and the New Testament, as well as to Jews who separate themselves from ritual impurity.⁵⁵

R. Joshua's first statement receives the following gloss in the Babylonian Talmud: "A woman prefers a *qab* that has lechery with it to nine *qab* with abstinence."⁵⁶ Ilan interprets this passage to mean

⁵³ Translation from Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 76.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵⁶ *b. Sotah* 22b. Translation from Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 76.

that “R. Joshua asserts that women’s sexual drives are paramount in their lives; the text’s position in the Mishnah suggests that in order to avoid sexual misconduct, women should be married and ruled by their husbands.”⁵⁷ Eliezer Diamond suggests that “this dictum of R. Joshua’s makes it clear that for him women and *perišut* are mutually exclusive.”⁵⁸ For R. Joshua, women are not interested in a life of abstinence—they prefer poverty (if it comes with licentiousness) to wealth (if that requires abstinence). In this rabbinic view, women are not capable of the required self-control.⁵⁹

In this light, how should we interpret the next statement in the Mishnah that “a woman who is a *perushah*” (among others) brings destruction upon the world? On the face of it, this would seem to say that even if *perishut* is a virtue when practiced by men, it is destructive if followed by women. Ilan suggests that this phrase should be read in its context, which refers to the plague of *perushim* (i.e., of Pharisees). Thus the *perushah* woman may also be a Pharisaic woman.⁶⁰ Diamond, however, interprets it as an “abstinent woman,” and I believe that this is a defensible position, especially in light of the previous statement by R. Joshua.⁶¹ The Palestinian Talmud deals very harshly with the “abstinent woman”: “An abstinent woman—she sits and mocks words of Torah. And she [Leah] said, ‘You are to sleep with me’ . . . and he lay with her that night” (Gen 30:16) (*y. Soṭah* 3.4.19a). The abstinent woman is too foolish to understand this passage correctly: “she ends up engaging in excessive prudery, mocking some passages in the Torah because they are too vulgar for her sensibilities.”⁶² The Palestinian Talmud adds two other types of women to the abstinent female category and views them just as harshly: “They added to them a fasting virgin—she fasts [and] loses her virginity. And a traveling widow—one who goes about and receives an evil name” (*y. Soṭah* 3.4.16b). A virgin who fasts is not

⁵⁷ Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (TSAJ 76; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 19–20.

⁵⁸ Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 76.

⁵⁹ Wolfson remarks appositely on the rabbinic view of the *ishah perushah*, “In contrast to early Christianity, where virginity and fasting on the part of women were considered virtuous acts of piety facilitating the angelomorphic transformation of the carnal body and the consequent return to Paradise, rabbinic sages castigated women who embraced a life of renunciation focused primarily on sexuality and eating” (*Language, Eros, Being*, 299–300).

⁶⁰ Ilan, *Integrating Women*, 20.

⁶¹ Diamond, *Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 76.

⁶² Ibid.

engaging in a meritorious act—instead, she is doing something that will destroy her virginity and thus make it harder for her to find a good marriage partner. A traveling widow acquires an evil name by traveling about and, presumably, engaging in disreputable acts, of a possibly sexual nature. In both of these cases the woman is not under male control.

The Babylonian Talmud does not directly comment on the abstinent woman, but a *baraita* suggests a disapproving interpretation, using categories similar to those added by the Palestinian Talmud: "Our Rabbis have taught: A praying virgin, a traveling widow and a minor whose months are not completed—behold these bring destruction upon the world" (*b. Soṭah* 22a). Unlike the Palestinian Talmud, it does not explain why the virgin and the widow are destructive, but simply asserts their destructive nature. Yet what comes next is a very interesting interpretation of the virgin and the widow that suggests a positive way to view them within the rabbinic context: "But it is not so; for R. Yoḥanan has said: 'We learnt fear of sin from a virgin and [confidence in] the bestowal of reward from a widow!'" (*b. Soṭah* 22a). R. Yoḥanan then quotes from a prayer he heard a virgin utter: "Lord of the Universe! You have created Paradise and Gehinnom; You have created righteous and wicked. May it be Your will that men should not stumble through me." The virgin's prayer is not for her own benefit, but intended solely to prevent *men* from sinning because of her. R. Yoḥanan thus firmly situates the praying virgin in the context of male-female relationships, not in a more extensive realm of prayer where the virgin might be trying to come closer to God. His interpretation of the traveling widow places her firmly within a specifically rabbinic framework: "[Confidence in] the bestowal of reward from a widow—a certain widow had a synagogue in her neighborhood, yet she used to come daily to the School of R. Yoḥanan and pray there. He said to her, 'My daughter, is there not a synagogue in your neighborhood?' She answered him, 'Rabbi, but have I not the reward for the steps?'" (*b. Soṭah* 22a). She does not go to her local synagogue, which might not have been controlled by the rabbis, as was often the case, but to the *bet midrash* of R. Yoḥanan, where prayer would be conducted according to rabbinic rules.⁶³ This is a more generous interpretation, however,

⁶³ Lee I. Levine, "The Sages and the Synagogue in Late Antiquity: The Evidence of the Galilee," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. I. Levine; New York: Jewish

because it grants the traveling widow a religious sensibility that is not connected to her sexual life—she travels to a farther place of prayer in order to gain religious merit.

One possible context for denunciations of the abstinent woman in the Mishnah and the Palestinian Talmud may be a reaction against the valuation of ascetic women by Christian communities, whether those of the apocryphal Acts or those of the “Great Church” (i.e., incipient monastic communities). The fact that the denunciation is worse in the Palestinian than in the Babylonian Talmud may testify to the Christian context, which would be much more salient for Jews living in Palestine under Byzantine Christian rule. The abstinent woman is explained in the Babylonian Talmud as referring to the “praying virgin” and the “traveling widow,” while in the Palestinian Talmud she is equated with the “fasting virgin.” One might point out that these women are problematic in rabbinic terms because they are not being controlled by men in marriage. In the Babylonian Talmud R. Yoḥanan turns this in a positive direction with his two redefinitions of the virgin and the widow. The virgin, in particular, is given a prayer that refers exclusively to the way in which men can sin because of her—there is no other explanation given for her prayer. The traveling widow is domesticated by saying that she travels to R. Yoḥanan’s house of study to pray. In the Palestinian Talmud, however, the threat that such women pose seems to be that they are perceived to be sexually promiscuous. In the stories about women in the apocryphal Acts, we also find that a newly-ascetic woman, who refuses to be married or who leaves her husband, is therefore not subject to her husband’s control. Moreover, her chastity is suspect because she attends upon a male apostle, a man to whom she is not married.

Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 201–22. The *bet midrash* was the primary rabbinic institution, while Jewish society at large participated in the synagogue. This could include (for Palestine) the *nasi*, the wealthy, the community in general and the sages (204). As Levine notes, “it must be remembered that throughout antiquity, and well into the Middle Ages, the rabbis never played an official role *per se* in the synagogue. They were not employees of this institution . . . Moreover, the ancient synagogue was primarily a local institution” (212). He also points out that “[s]ynagogues were built and run by people other than the rabbis” (216).

WOMEN—AND THEIR ABSENCE—IN THE HEKHALOT LITERATURE

Many of the Hekhalot texts explicitly state the requirements to which the practitioner must adhere in order to perform the rituals correctly, rituals both to invoke angels and bring them down to earth, as well as rituals that initiate the ascent/descent of the practitioner through the *hekhalot* to the throne of God.⁶⁴ In this section I will discuss several representative rituals and the ways in which they define the practitioner as male and exclude the possibility of female participation. By so doing, I will reveal what the important qualifications are for the rituals and the ways in which they define the ideal man who is to perform them. Here I will explicitly engage in a feminist reading, using a hermeneutics of suspicion to uncover the exclusion of women.

I will also frequently include comparisons with rabbinic literature, not because the authors of the Hekhalot literature are necessarily to be equated with the redactors and tradents of rabbinic literature, but because the Hekhalot texts claim to be rabbinic texts with rabbinic heroes (e.g., R. Aqiba, R. Eliezer, R. Nehuniah b. ha-Qanah), often using rabbinic terminology (e.g., "mishnah" for a section of a Hekhalot text) and exploiting the most ascetic aspects of rabbinic culture. If the rabbis could not countenance ascetic women, then certainly such females could not be imagined by the authors of the Hekhalot literature, who, in their own practice of *askesis*, exceed the rabbis in rigor. Indeed, there is clear interplay between the authors of the Hekhalot literature and the rabbis, but it does not seem to be direct; the rabbis are not identical to the authors of the Hekhalot literature, but there is knowledge of rabbinic tradition (and maybe even resentment of rabbinic power) among the authors of the Hekhalot literature.⁶⁵

"He Descended in a Flame of Fire"

The first text I turn to in this analysis is one that describes a ritual to invoke Yofi'el, the angelic prince in charge of Torah knowledge.

⁶⁴ Some of the Hekhalot texts refer to the journey as a "descent," others as an "ascent." The use of the term "descent" in this context is still mysterious.

⁶⁵ See Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 437–46, for a discussion of the possible antagonism between the authors of the Hekhalot literature and the leaders of the rabbinic movement.

This ritual offers instructions for the preparations that the practitioner must undertake in order to make himself fit to receive a revelation of the angel and then provides a list of divine names to recite in order to secure the revelation:

R. Ishmael said: "When I was thirteen, I was disturbed about this matter, and I returned to R. Neḥuniah b. HaQanah, my rabbi. I said to him: 'The Prince of the Torah, what is his name?' He said to me: 'Yofi'el is his name.' "Immediately I stood up and afflicted myself forty days and I said the great name until I brought him down. He descended in a flame of fire and his face was like lightning. When I saw him I was shocked and trembled and fell down. He said to me: 'Son of Adam, what quality do you have that you disturbed the great family?' I said to him: 'It is revealed and known before the One who spoke and the world came into being that I did not bring you down for your glory, but to do the will of your Creator.' He said to me: 'Son of Adam, stinking drop, worm and maggot.'" [Instructions for ascetic preparations:] The one who wishes that he [the angel] be revealed to him should sit in fasting forty days, immerse twenty-four times every day and not eat any polluted thing. He should not look at a woman and he should sit in a completely dark house. [*Voces mysticae* follow].⁶⁶

This adjuration immediately reveals the purity concerns of the Hekhalot literature. The angel calls R. Ishmael, "Son of Adam, stinking drop, worm and maggot." The "stinking drop" refers to a drop of semen. This phrase is known from *m. 'Abot* 3.1, where Akavia ben Mehalelel says that human beings should "know from whence" they have come: "from a putrid drop." The idea of the impurity of semen and its incompatibility with the angels appears in the adjurations discussed below, which expressly tell the practitioner to avoid a seminal emission in order to perform the ritual.

Another intriguing Hekhalot passage states that when the angels who have duties on earth among human beings ascend to heaven to participate in the angelic liturgy, they must immerse in a river of fire in order to purify themselves from any human pollution, including abnormal genital discharges, with which they may have come into contact prior to reentering the firmament:

Do the ministering angels have abnormal genital discharges and the impurity of menstruation and parturient-impurity, for which they need immersion?⁶⁷ Rather, the ministering angels, who are appointed over

⁶⁶ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §314. The manuscript followed is ms Vatican 228.

⁶⁷ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §181, ms N8128. ms Oxford 1531 mentions *zab* and *zabah*, *niddah*, childbirth "or any impurity."

the work of the world, descend every day to make peace in the world and, when the time comes for song, they ascend to heaven.⁶⁸ Because of the stench of human beings, born of woman (*yelud ishah*), carriers of impurity, who suffer from genital discharges and filth, they [the angels] wash themselves in fire and cleanse and purify and take care and separate and inspect and strengthen and exalt and improve themselves in fire until they make themselves holy and become like the angels of highest heaven.⁶⁹

This passage is intriguing in part because these impurities all come from those "born of woman." Women, of course, are the direct source of many impurities—in particular menstruation and childbirth, which occur after they have incorporated the "stinking drop" into their own bodies.

These texts are further supported by those places where directions are given to the initiates (e.g., R. Ishmael in *3 Enoch*) and, implicitly, also to the reader of the text regarding what to do and what to refrain from doing in order to call upon the angels. Among other rules, the practitioner is frequently told that he must not look at a woman.⁷⁰ The belief that a man's spiritual focus may be hindered by seeing a woman, clothed or naked, is well-known in rabbinic literature. As Michael Satlow notes,

The primary rabbinic understanding of female nakedness is that it arouses sexual passion in men. The rabbis frequently exhort (rather than prohibit outright with a legal ruling) men not to look at women in any state of dress or undress, for fear that they will be led into sexual misconduct . . . A naked woman, it is assumed, could sexually arouse the men who see her. In the post-tannaitic literature this assumption gains force. Many baraitot counsel men not to look at women. One advises against looking at all women, especially those wearing colorful clothes (*b. 'Abod. Zar. 20a*)⁷¹ . . . Palestinian and Babylonian amoraic dicta on female nakedness increase the concern of men gazing upon women. In one story a man is counseled by the rabbis to die rather

⁶⁸ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §181, ms New York 8128. ms Oxford does not include the phrase "to make peace in the world."

⁶⁹ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§181, 791, 811.

⁷⁰ Another ritual text (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §560) requires the practitioner to avoid looking at colored garments (probably worn by a woman), because of their arousing nature (see *m. 'Abim 2.2*).

⁷¹ *b. 'Abod. Zar. 20a* reads as follows: "The one who sees beautiful creatures should say, 'Blessed is he for he created thus in his world.' Is it permitted to look? They answered: 'And keep yourself from every evil thing' (Deut 23:10)—that a man should not look at a beautiful woman, even if she is unmarried, and at a married woman, even if she is ugly, and not at a woman's colored garments."

than to see a woman naked or, indeed, even to hear her voice: the point is to protect her modesty (*b. Sanh.* 75a). One Babylonian rabbi equates looking at a woman's little finger with looking at her genitalia; a Palestinian rabbi in the same sugya equates sight of a "handbreadth" of a woman's flesh with looking at her genitalia (*b. Ber.* 24a).⁷²

In the passage from tractate *Berakhot* that Satlow mentions, which is part of a longer discussion of nakedness during the recitation of the *Shema*, several rabbis mention the parts of a woman's body a man would find sexually arousing (particularly in his wife) and thus prevent him from reciting the *Shema*. They include the little finger, the leg, the hair and a woman's voice:

R. Isaac said: "A handbreadth (of exposed skin) in a woman is nakedness (*ervah*)."

In what way? Shall I say, when looking at it? But hasn't R. Sheshet said: "Why does the verse list the outward ornaments with the inner? To tell you that if one gazes at the little finger of a woman, it is as if he gazed at the place of filth (*to'ef*)!"⁷³ No, it means, in one's own wife, and at the time when he recites the *Shema*. R. Hisda said: "A woman's leg is nakedness, as it says, 'Bare your leg, wade through the rivers' (Isa 47:2) and it says afterwards, 'Your nakedness shall be uncovered and your shame shall be uncovered'" (Isa 47:3). R. Samuel said: "A woman's voice is nakedness, as it says, 'For your voice is sweet and your face is comely'" (Song 2:14). (*b. Ber.* 24a)

A woman's nakedness thus begins far before complete nudity; it can include her little finger, her leg, her hair and even her voice. "Nakedness" is anything that might sexually arouse a man and the authors of the Hekhalot literature seem to worry greatly about what might

⁷² Michael Satlow, "Jewish Constructions of Nakedness in Late Antiquity," *JBL* 116 (1997): 429–54 (440–41).

⁷³ This saying of R. Sheshet occurs in *b. Šabb.* 64a–b, as part of a discussion of the sexual license committed at Ba'al Peor. After the Israelites revenge themselves upon the Midianites and then conduct a census, they bring an offering to God to atone for taking the census. This offering is made up of the spoil that they had taken from the Midianites, including women's jewelry (Num 31:50): "So we have brought as an offering to the Lord such articles of gold as each of us came upon: armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings and pendants (*kumaz*), that expiation may be made for our persons before the Lord." The word *kumaz* is interpreted by *notarikon* to mean *kan mekom zimmah*—"here is the place of lust." *Kumaz* is also understood as "a cast of the womb" (*defus shel bet ha-rehem*). The list of jewelry is defined, therefore, to refer to both inner and outer adornments. For this reason, R. Sheshet says, "Why does the verse list the outward ornaments with the inner? To teach you: Whoever looks upon a woman's little finger it is as though he gazed upon the place of filth (*mekom ha-torpah*)."

arouse men; they do everything they can to avoid it, so that the man will not have a seminal emission from any cause that might render him impure, as we see in the next section.

Adjuration of the Prince of the Presence

Phrased as a conversation between R. Eliezer and his disciple R. Akiba, this text provides directions for how to invoke Metatron, the Prince of the Presence (*Sar ha-Panim*), the highest and most pre-eminent angel, who stands and serves before the divine Throne of Glory. The directions are divided into two sections; the first part instructs the practitioner in the ascetic practices that he must follow in order to prepare himself for the utterance of the adjurations, while the second part gives the texts of the incantations themselves and describes what will happen when the angel descends. The goal of the ritual is to receive a revelation from the angel and to speak with him "as a man speaks with his friend." The text states: "He [R. Eliezer] said to me [R. Akiba]: 'The one who binds himself to make theurgic use of him [i.e., to adjure the angel] should sit in fast one day on the day that he brings him down. Before that day he should sanctify himself seven days from seminal emission (*qeri*) and dip himself in the water-canal. He should not have conversation with a woman."⁷⁴ At the end of the days of his fasting and purification, on the day of his fast, he should go down and sit in water up to his neck and say [the following incantation] before he adjures."⁷⁵ As in the previous text, also here R. Eliezer speaks both to R. Akiba and to the implied reader. His directions introduce an explicitly sexual element that the previous ritual does not: the avoidance of ejaculation, either during sexual intercourse or from other causes (nocturnal emission, masturbation). The requirement to "dip in the water-canal" is probably to ensure purification from seminal impurity.⁷⁶ In addition to

⁷⁴ The other manuscripts of this section (mss Oxford 1531 [Michael 9], Munich 22 and Dropsie 436) do not include the word "with a woman."

⁷⁵ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §623. The manuscript followed is New York JTSA 8128. A Geniza fragment (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, G-1) of this same section reads: "The man who binds himself to make theurgic use of him, sits in fast one day. Before that day he sanctifies himself seven days and on the eighth day, on the day of his fast..."

⁷⁶ Cf. Lev 15:16: "When a man has an emission of semen, he shall bathe his whole body in water and remain unclean until evening."

avoidance of sexual intercourse with women, the practitioner must also avoid even talking with a woman.

The incompatibility of divine revelation with sexual activity goes back to Exod 19:10 and 19:14–15: “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go to the people and warn them to stay pure today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes’ . . . Moses came down from the mountain to the people and warned the people to stay pure and they washed their clothes. And he said to the people, ‘Be ready for the third day: do not go near a woman.’” Here “purification” means avoidance of sexual intercourse. As the passage is written in Exodus, it is addressed only to the males and thus seems to exclude females from the coming revelation. The rabbis, however, argued that the prohibition was for the benefit of both men and women. They believed that after sexual intercourse a woman might keep semen in her body for three days; thus, the prohibition of intercourse for three days meant that both men and women would be pure when God descended upon Mt. Sinai after three days (*b. Šabb.* 86a–b). Indeed, Moses, who would constantly be in contact with God, entirely separated himself from his wife in order always to be pure (*b. Šabb.* 87a).

The avoidance of even speaking with a woman is reminiscent of the passage from *m. ʿAbot* 1:5: “And do not have too much conversation with a woman. About his wife it was said and so much the more so about his fellow’s wife. From this the sages said: A man who has too much conversation with a woman causes evil to himself, takes away from words of Torah and his end is to inherit Gehinnom.” Not only sexual intercourse makes a man unfit to receive revelation from an angel, but in fact any contact with a woman will distract him from his ritual—indeed, just talking too much to a woman can lead a man away from Torah study.

Adjuration of Metatron

A third text provides instructions for a mystical method of learning Torah through the repetition of the names of Metatron:⁷⁷ “How does he make theurgic use of him? He (should) go and sit in the house alone and fast the whole day. He should not eat the bread of a

⁷⁷ On the adjurations of the Sar Torah as a way of learning Torah, see Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 33–149; Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 376–86, 427–38; and Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 190–203.

woman. He should not look at a man and not at a woman. When he walks in the market he should raise his eyes from every person and he should not look at even the one-day-old baby. He should immerse himself every evening . . ."⁷⁸ This text introduces a new form of avoidance of women: eating bread that a woman has made. The issue at hand is also purity.

An intriguing midrash (*Gen. Rab.* 48.14) on the meal that Abraham and Sarah (*Gen* 18:1–15) served to the angels illustrates this issue. Abraham rushed to offer the angels food and drink, telling Sarah to make cakes and having a servant-boy prepare a calf to eat. He then "took curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared and set these before them" (*Gen* 18:8). The midrash notes that the cakes that Sarah made were not mentioned as part of the meal that Abraham gave to the angels: "And the loaf, where is it? Ephraim the contentious, a student of R. Meir, [said] in the name of R. Meir, 'She became menstruous and the dough became impure.'" A talmudic parallel reads, "Ephraim the contentious, the student of R. Meir, said in the name of R. Meir, 'Abraham our father used to eat ordinary food in a state of purity and Sarah our mother on that day became menstruous.'" ⁷⁹ Abraham did not bring bread to the visitors

⁷⁸ Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, G-19. This is part of a larger text that provides instructions on how to adjure Metatron, the Prince of the divine Presence. Another Hekhalot text contains similar prohibitions on looking at people of various types and not eating bread baked by a woman or water poured by a woman. It also explicitly directs the practitioner to avoid women (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §489, ms. Michael 9):

A man who finds this book and discovers everything which is written in it should not lie on his bed for forty days. He should not look at the face of a male or a female twin. He should not look at the face of a male or female leper. He should not look at the face of a man or woman with a discharge. He should not look at the face of a menstruating woman. He should not eat bread (baked) by a woman. He should not drink water (poured) by a woman [ms New York 8128: his wife]. Rather, he should knead (the dough) with his own hands and he should grind with his own hands and he should bake one loaf each day and eat it. He should not eat meat and he should not eat any kind of fish and he should not drink wine or strong drink. He should not eat onions or garlic or garden vegetables. If he has a seminal emission, even on the last day (of the forty days), all of the previous days are negated and he must return to the beginning. He should wear white [ms N.: clothes] and immerse (himself) in the river every day, eighty days, evening and morning, and become pure [ms N. reads: he should purify himself from all impurity].

This text, however, is not an incantation text; instead, it is the preface to a longer text that speaks of the power of the names of God.

⁷⁹ *b. B. Meš'a* 87a. *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (36) also knows this tradition: "He [Abraham] said to Sarah, make a meal for them. At that time, when Sarah was kneading, she saw the blood of *niddah*, therefore he did not present the cakes to them."

because on that very day Sarah's menstrual period had begun, presumably as a result of their visit and announcement that she would have a son.⁸⁰ Since Abraham was exceptionally pious and ate even ordinary food while in a state of purity, he would not want to eat bread that his menstruating wife had prepared. Because she was menstruating, she rendered impure the dough, including the cakes made from it, making them unfit to eat for men concerned with retaining purity. According to *m. Kelim* 1:3, the blood of a menstruating woman renders what it touches unclean and, according to *m. Zabim* 5:6, anyone who touches a menstruating woman imparts a certain degree of impurity to *terumah*, the priestly portion. The woman herself would thus also make other things impure, including food and drink.

We see, therefore, that these three incantation texts make it clear that the implied practitioner must be male and that certain regulations exclude women *de facto*: the practitioner must avoid having a seminal emission,⁸¹ talking to a woman, looking at a woman or eating bread baked by a woman. Obviously, only a man can have a seminal emission.⁸² Further, by definition a woman cannot avoid having con-

⁸⁰ Through exegesis of the word *'ednah* ("pleasure") in Genesis 18, *Gen. Rab.* 48.17 additionally brings in the idea of Sarah menstruating: "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; Sarah had stopped having the periods of women. And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment (*'ednah*)—with my husband so old?'" (Gen 18:11–12). The midrash says: "A woman—the whole time that she is childbearing, she has periods (*vesetot*), and I, after I am withered, am I to have *'ednah*—*'idanin* (menstrual periods)?" The word *'ednah* also seems to mean "renew" in this context. Cf. the comments in Chanoch Albeck, ed., with Julius Theodor, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1965), 2:494. Also see the interesting article by Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Sarah and the Hyena: Laughter, Menstruation, and the Genesis of a Double Entendre," *HR* 36 (1996): 13–41, which deals, among other topics, with the interpretation of the retelling of the Sarah and Abraham story in Qur'an 11.71. This *ayah* is usually translated, "His wife, who stood near, laughed as We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob" (Ahmed Ali, trans., *Al-Quran: A Contemporary Translation* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988], 195). The word translated "laughed" can also mean "she menstruated," as discussed in medieval Qur'anic exegesis (see Stetkevych, "Sarah and the Hyena," 27–29).

⁸¹ Several other Hekhalot ritual texts also require the practitioner to avoid a seminal emission. See Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§299, 424, 489, and 684.

⁸² The rabbis, however, thought that women emitted their own seed during sexual intercourse. See the discussion in Rachel Biale, *Women and Jewish Law* (New York: Schocken, 1984), 143–44. She refers to Lev 12:1–2 ("The Lord said to Moses: 'Say to the children of Israel: When a woman gives forth seed and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as at the time of her menstruation'") as the exegetical hook for such discussions. Also see the analysis by Pieter W. van

versation with a woman, if only by virtue of the fact that she herself participates in the conversation. Women were the most likely people to bake bread for the household, making it difficult for them to avoid eating bread baked by other women (as well as, of course, bread that they had made themselves), while the male adept could ensure this avoidance by baking his own bread, as he is so instructed in other similar rituals.⁸³

Descent to the Merkabah

The only Hekhalot text in which a woman appears as a character presents her solely as an obstacle to the purity that is needed for the descent to the Merkabah.⁸⁴ In this scene, R. Neḥuniah b. HaQanah sits in a trance in the midst of his disciples, describing what he saw as he traveled through the *hekhalot* in order to achieve the vision of the Merkabah, providing instructions for what to do if they wished to follow him. His disciple R. Ishmael says, "We came and sat before him and all of the multitudes of the companions were standing, for they beheld the globes of fire and the torches of fire that separated them from him. R. Neḥuniah b. HaQanah sat and arranged before them all the matters of the Merkabah, descent and ascent, how the one who descends, descends, and how the one who ascends, ascends."⁸⁵ After describing the passage through the first five palaces, R. Neḥuniah says something that the disciples do not understand. The descent account is then interrupted by the disciples' attempt to bring R. Neḥuniah back to earth so that they can ask him the meaning of his words. They induce in him a slight amount of impurity that

der Horst, "Sarah's Seminal Emission: Hebrews 11:11 in the Light of Ancient Embryology," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson and W. A. Meeks; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 287–302, esp. 299–301. He cites, for example, *b. Nid.* 31a (which describes the contribution that the man's white semen and the woman's red semen makes to the child) and *b. B. Qam.* 92a (where both the man's and the woman's seed is referred to as *shikwat zera'*). The reference in the Hekhalot texts does not, however, seem to be to sexual intercourse, but to nocturnal emission, which is commonly referred to as *qeri* (see Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005], 1419). I am grateful to Professor Bernadette Brooten for drawing my attention to this problem.

⁸³ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§299, 489, 684.

⁸⁴ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§224–28.

⁸⁵ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §203.

will cause him to be dismissed from before the divine throne. This impurity comes from a woman who has had her menstrual period and then subsequently purified herself through immersion in a *mikveh*, but about whom there is some question whether she is in fact pure.⁸⁶

R. Ishmael said, "Immediately I took a rag of fine wool and I gave it to R. Aqiba. R. Aqiba gave it to our slave and said, 'Go and place this rag next to a woman who immersed, but whose immersion was invalid, and have her immerse (anew).' If this woman would come and explain the cycle of her menstruation before the scholars (*havurah*), knowing that one would forbid while the majority would allow, they would say to that woman, 'Touch this rag with the tip of your middle finger, but do not press the fingertip on it. Rather, (touch it thus), like a man who removes a hair which has fallen into his eye, removing it with a touch.'" They went and did thus and laid the rag before R. Ishmael. He put on it a myrtle bough full of foliatum [ointment prepared from spikenard leaves] that had been dipped in pure balsam. They placed in on the knees of R. Nehuniah b. HaQanah and at once he was dismissed from before the Throne of Glory.⁸⁷

In this text the issue revolves around whether the woman is impure or not. Apparently, her first immersion in the *mikveh* (after the cessation of her menstrual period) was invalid; it did not conform to the rules in some way. Therefore, she is to be instructed to go through another immersion, to rectify what was not done during the first immersion. At this point she is supposed to go to the group of scholars (the *havurah*) and explain the cycle of her menstruation. According to what she says, most of them would rule that she is pure, while one would rule that she is impure. That decision would theoretically be good enough on earth, where halakhic decisions are made by majority vote, but apparently it does not hold in heaven, where the minority opinion is enough to render her impure. As Saul Lieberman comments on this passage, "According to the Halakha prevailing on earth no impurity was imparted to R. Nehunya. The woman was ritually pure, for such was the ruling of the majority of

⁸⁶ For detailed discussions, see Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 9–13; Saul Lieberman, "The Knowledge of *Halakha* by the Author (or Authors) of the *Heikhaloth*," Appendix 2 to Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 241–44; Lawrence Schiffman, "The Recall of Rabbi Nehuniah ben ha-Qanah from Ecstasy in the *Hekhalot Rabbati*," *AJSR* 1 (1976): 269–81; Margarete Schluter, "Die Erzählung von der Ruckhölung des R. Nehunya ben haqana aus der Merkava-Schau in ihrem redaktionelle Rahmen," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 10 (1982): 65–109; and Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 170–72.

⁸⁷ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§225–26.

the rabbis . . . In heaven, however, the rules of R. Eliezer prevailed, and in his opinion the woman was ritually impure."⁸⁸ This degree of impurity, imparted to a piece of cloth which is then placed on R. Neḥuniah's knees, is enough to render him impure and cause his dismissal from heaven.

The woman does not speak or have any significant role in the mystical descent; she appears only because the sages used her to create the smallest possible level of impurity for R. Neḥuniah. Her possible menstrual impurity also bars her from having any positive role in the descent; she only participates in the action because of her impurity. While the descent texts do not explicitly say that women are forbidden to "descend to the Merkabah," the fact that a woman appears in the texts only in this connection intimates that women can be actors only on the very periphery of the ritual and then only in a negative sense, because of the impurity they may still possibly bear even after their menstrual periods are over and they have immersed in the *mikveh*. Adherence to normal rabbinic laws of menstrual impurity might seem to make it possible for women to achieve the required level of purity for descent to the Merkabah, but adherence to this stricter level of purity would bar them from doing so.⁸⁹

THE EXCLUDED WOMAN: CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The root of women's exclusion from the Hekhalot literature and the practices described in these texts is the role they play in *men's* imagining of the qualifications for contact with the holy. Women are seen only as a potential source of impurity, either from sexual temptation (possibly leading men to the ejaculation of impure semen) or from menstrual/parturient impurity (transmitted to a man through touch or food prepared by a woman). Even if a woman could not threaten a man's purity by her own body's contamination, her presence could lead to the man's arousal (thus indicating that hearing and sight were also an issue of concern—all the senses of the male practitioner were thus potentially endangered). The fear of impurity brought by women in the Hekhalot literature goes beyond the strictures expressed in rabbinic literature (although often showing knowledge of those

⁸⁸ Lieberman, "Knowledge of Halakha," 244.

⁸⁹ See Biale, *Women and Jewish Law*, 160.

strictures), which permit a man to be in the same room with his wife while reciting the *Shema* or to pray or read the Torah even if he has had a seminal emission, because “words of Torah are not susceptible to impurity.”⁹⁰ And rabbinic literature, of course, countenances the possibility that women can both pray and study Torah.⁹¹ The insistence in the Hekhalot literature upon a man’s purity seems to reflect a belief that women could never be sufficiently pure enough either to descend to the Merkabah or to adjure angels for revelation; therefore, the possibility is never raised in this literature. Judith Baskin makes a statement about the place of women in *Sefer Hasidim* that could equally well apply to the Hekhalot literature: “The pietist’s desire for separation from the corruption of the material world, and his wish to displace the pleasures of human sexuality through his devotion to the divine, is built, in part, upon the objectification of women. That such spiritual options were simply not available or even imagined for Jewish women is, perhaps, the other side of the coin.”⁹²

What, then, could have made revelatory mysticism possible for Jewish women? As I noted earlier in this essay, the *Testament of Job* and *Joseph and Aseneth* portray women speaking to heavenly figures, using the “languages of the angels” and perhaps even bringing angels down from heaven. Both texts seem to take for granted the possibility of women as well as men participating in heavenly realities and invoking angels. Neither tradition completely challenges the androcentric worldview of their time (e.g., Aseneth says that she will be Joseph’s “maidservant and slave” [13:15]; Job’s wife in the *Testament of Job* is portrayed as a woman ignorant of heavenly realities, while Job himself has heavenly perception) and they do not dispute the notion that one needs to be sexually pure in order to encounter heavenly realities. Aseneth is a virgin, as the text mentions many times, and the daughters of Job are unmarried (as far as we know from the text). Indeed, prior to her marriage to Joseph, Aseneth is

⁹⁰ Attributed to R. Judah b. Betayra, *b. Ber.* 22a; cf. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 123–28.

⁹¹ Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 123; Tosefta *Ber.* 2.13 permits the menstruant and women after childbirth to read the Torah and study “mishnah, midrash, halakhot and aggadot.”

⁹² Judith R. Baskin, “From Separation to Displacement: The Problem of Women in *Sefer Hasidim*,” *AJSR* 19 (1994): 1–18 (18).

in fact secluded from men altogether.⁹³ In this they agree with Philo in *de Vita Contemplativa*, who says of the women in the Therapeutic community: "Most of them are aged virgins who have maintained their purity not under constraint, like some of the priestesses among the Greeks, but voluntarily through their zealous desire for wisdom. Eager to enjoy intimacy with her [Wisdom], they have been unconcerned with the pleasures of the body, desiring a progeny not mortal but immortal, which only the soul that loves God is capable of engendering unaided, since the Father has sown in her intelligible rays whereby she can behold the teachings of wisdom."⁹⁴ The women of the group were able to engage in their religious activities of study of Scripture and the composing of hymns because most of them were "aged virgins," being without the encumbrances of family or the impurity of sexuality to hinder them. While Philo does not describe the members of the Therapeutic society as conversing with angels or ascending to heaven, in many respects their way of life resembles that required for the Hekhalot invocations: isolation in a house by oneself, the ingestion of plain food and drink and abstinence from sexual activity. Since the women of the group are "aged virgins," their menstrual periods have probably ceased, so they do not have to deal with that source of impurity (although Philo does not address this particular issue). In agreement with the authors of the Hekhalot texts, the writers of these other Jewish works share the belief that one must be pure in order to participate in heavenly realities, but, unlike the Hekhalot texts, they do not assume that women are incapable of reaching such a level of purity. In these other Jewish texts, the division between purity and impurity is not one that divides men from women; it is an opposition that crosses gender lines and in fact enables both women and men to converse with angels or engage in contemplation.

⁹³ For further discussion, see Heike Omerzu, "Women, Magic and Angels: On the Emancipation of Job's Daughters in the Apocryphal Testament of Job," in *Bodies in Question* (ed. D. Bird and Y. Sherwood; London: Ashgate, 2005), 85–103.

⁹⁴ *Contempl.* 68. Translation is taken from David Winston, ed. and trans., *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections* (Classics of Western Spirituality; New York: Paulist, 1981), 53. Diamond misreads this passage (*Holy Men and Hunger Artists*, 41) with this translation: "Eager to have [chastity] for their life mate." It is clear from the text in Philo that the "aged virgins" (whom Diamond does not name, but one receives the impression from his discussion that he believes this is a reference to the *men* in the Therapeutic community) are eager to have *wisdom* for their life mate, not chastity, which they already possess. Also see the essay by Mary Rose D'Angelo in this volume.

The existence of these other (more inclusive) traditions raises historical as well as theoretical questions. Why were such works possible in early Greek-speaking Judaism? What factors made it possible to portray a mystical ideal for women as well as for men? At issue here is the larger question of why Christianity has a long tradition of female mystics while in Judaism that option of religious expression was mostly closed off to women.⁹⁵ In order to explain this divergence, it is helpful to delineate three axes of difference that are operative in both the Greek Jewish and the Hekhalot texts: purity/impurity, male/female and celibate/sexual. The Greek Jewish texts present celibate women as being pure enough to attain heaven. The celibate state is a possibility for women (even if marriage might be considered better); it is not entirely ruled out as a social option. Rabbinic Judaism, however, rules out celibacy for both men and women. This rabbinic move stands in contrast to early Christianity, which leaves open this possibility for both men and women (as evidenced in the letters of Paul and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*), a recognition that persists in the development of monasticism. One could perhaps argue that early Christianity continued this possibility evident in the Greek Jewish tradition while rabbinic Judaism rejected it.⁹⁶ Alongside the general valuation of celibacy and virginity in the wider tradition, Christian monasticism in particular provided a social space for women to be intensely involved with the spiritual life, a space that was not similarly provided for women in Judaism. In rabbinic Judaism the study-house offered such an alternative place for men (away from women) to seek spiritual ideals (principally study), but women were not welcome there except as occasional visitors.

The rabbinic rejection of celibacy functions in tandem with the other two axes of pure/impure and male/female so as to exclude

⁹⁵ There is evidence, however, for the presence of visionary, charismatic women in circles associated with the Safed kabbalists of the sixteenth century. See Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 120–23; Jeffrey Howard Chajes, “City of the Dead: Spirit Possession in Sixteenth-Century Safed,” in *Spirit Possession in Judaism: Cases and Contexts from the Middle Ages to the Present* (ed. M. Goldish; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 124–58; idem, *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism* (Jewish Culture and Contexts; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 97–118; and Morris M. Faierstein, “*Maggidim*, Spirits, and Women in Rabbi Hayyim Vital’s *Book of Visions*,” in Goldish, *Spirit Possession in Judaism*, 186–96.

⁹⁶ Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 31–60.

women from the mystical ideal. One could argue that in the rabbinic worldview women are generally less pure than men; they can become impure through their menstrual periods and through childbirth. For example, while the various other purity restrictions to which both men and women were to adhere during the time of the temple fell by the wayside after its destruction, the laws of *niddah* (menstrual impurity), on the other hand, remained in full force.⁹⁷ This does not mean that men could not become impure; the Hekhalot texts are excessively concerned with the possibility of a man having a seminal emission, but this prospect does not keep all men from attaining the appropriate level of purity. Although men's semen can render them impure, they are conceived of as having power over it, in contrast to women who completely lack control of their menstrual blood.⁹⁸ The need to be pure was thus enforced unequally on men and on women. Although one could theoretically imagine that a woman could be pure enough to engage in the Hekhalot adjurations or the descent to the Merkabah, this does not seem to have been a possibility entertained by the authors of this literature. Indeed, the tendency to identify women with impurity may in fact have led to the association between women and the demonic found in the later kabbalistic literature.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Biale, *Women and Jewish Law*, 147–74.

⁹⁸ See the discussions by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 177–94; and Lawrence Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 136–54. Hoffman suggests that both he and Eilberg-Schwartz believe that “the key to understanding the map of pollution, and therefore the taboo against menstrual blood, was to be found in the concept of self-control” (*Covenant of Blood*, 151). He, like Eilberg-Schwartz, points out that “menstrual blood . . . is completely uncontrollable; it thus shares with nonseminal emissions the status of pollutant” (153). He draws the conclusion that “the binary opposition obtains between men who are in control of their blood, so of themselves, and therefore of society, and women who, lacking control of blood and therefore of self, are thus denied control of society as well” (154). Eilberg-Schwartz also discusses the binary opposition between self-controlled men and uncontrolled women in terms of the different valuations of the blood of circumcision and menstrual blood: “Women's blood is contaminating; men's blood has the power to create covenant” (*Savage in Judaism*, 180).

⁹⁹ As Gershom Scholem argues, “This exclusive masculinity for which Kabbalism has paid a high price, appears rather to be connected with an inherent tendency to lay stress on the demonic nature of women and the feminine element of the cosmos” (*Major Trends*, 37).

Rachel Elijor's work on the priestly antecedents of the Hekhalot literature reinforces my conclusions about why the Hekhalot rituals and circles were restricted to men.¹⁰⁰ As is well known, only men could be priests in Judaism and they could only become so by being born to a priestly father. In order for priests to enter the temple and to engage in sacrificial service, they had to purify themselves from many potential sources of impurity, including semen, abnormal genital discharges, menstrual blood and any form of contact with impure creeping creatures and dead bodies. The Hekhalot rituals require the practitioner to avoid many of the same potential sources of impurity: sexual intercourse, nocturnal emission, a menstruating woman and food prepared by her (like the priests, the practitioner is required to eat food that has not been touched by any impurity; i.e., he consumes only pure food that he has cooked himself). Thus, the intense care taken in these rituals to avoid contact with women, their blood and their food is a reflection of similar care taken to avoid female pollution in the practice of the temple cult. Further in this vein, Nancy Jay argues that Israelite sacrifice, like Greek and other cultural forms of sacrifice, associates "femaleness with what must be expiated."¹⁰¹ As she notes, "In the priestly rules, the very first illustration of occasions for expiatory sacrifices is after childbirth, when a woman must bring sin and burnt offerings" (cf. Lev 12).¹⁰² She describes "sacrifice as remedy for having been born a woman."¹⁰³ While the Hekhalot rituals do not involve sacrifice, they do draw on the long priestly tradition that forbids women to engage in the most sacred occupation and, as I noted above, the Hekhalot literature several times uses the term "born of woman" as a derogatory way to refer to the man who presumes to descend/ascend to the Merkabah. At the beginning of *Sefer Hekhalot* (3 *Enoch*), the angels who are trying to bar R. Ishmael's way refer to him as one "born of woman." Moreover, Metatron tells them that he comes from the tribe of Levi and from the seed of Aaron, whom God himself chose as his priest

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Elijor, "The *Merkavah* Tradition and the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism," in *Sino-Judaica: Jews and Chinese in Historical Dialogue* (ed. A. Oppenheimer; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1999), 101–58; and idem, *Three Temples*, esp. 232–65.

¹⁰¹ Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 28.

¹⁰² Ibid., 29.

¹⁰³ Ibid., xxiii.

and to whom he gave the crown of priesthood.¹⁰⁴ At that point the angels cease their objections and permit him to ascend. Thus, while R. Ishmael may have been born of a woman, he is a priest and a descendant of Aaron. In this text, then, R. Ishmael is the prototype of the man who ascends to the Merkabah. Elsewhere in the Hekhalot literature he also serves as a prototype of the man who invokes angels to descend and compels them to speak of heavenly things.¹⁰⁵

One wonders how the mystical expressions found in the Hekhalot literature might have been formed if both women and men had been involved in creating them. Given that the Hekhalot literature is part of late antique spirituality, which had a marked ascetic streak, it is likely that a form of Hekhalot mysticism that included both women and men would have still retained the strong ascetic focus. Both women and men would have adhered to purity laws and would have immersed themselves in water in order to cleanse themselves of the impurity of menstruation, childbirth, sexual intercourse or seminal emission. It is possible that, as in Philo's presentation of the Therapeutrides in *de Vita Contemplativa*, many of the women would have been “aged virgins” who occupied themselves with the ritual practices of the Hekhalot literature after their children had grown and they were able to devote time to spiritual pursuits. In that case, we might have seen something more like the spirituality of the *Testament of Job* or of *Joseph and Aseneth*, in which both women and men could have called angels down from heaven to teach them divine wisdom (which is, after all, depicted in Greek Jewish texts as a female figure) or have ascended to heaven to have visions of God and to participate in the angelic liturgy. That the Hekhalot literature did not imagine females playing such a role has, then, left us with one more gap in the history of women in antiquity—one that we still need to fill.

¹⁰⁴ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §3.

¹⁰⁵ Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§299–303, 313–14.

BODIES IN MOTION:
PRELIMINARY NOTES ON QUEER THEORY
AND RABBINIC LITERATURE

Gwynn Kessler

“That which is bent cannot be made straight; that
which is wanting cannot be numbered.” (Qoh 1:15)

“Consider the work of God; for who can make
straight what God has made bent?” (Qoh 7:13)

In the beginning of the book of Ecclesiastes, Qoheleth laments, “That which is bent cannot be made straight” (1:15). Qoheleth presumably makes such a statement from a place of utter despair. While he rages against the world—the way things are and will always be—my aim is to recontextualize his pronouncement within the field of queer theory, which works to recreate the world and dares to imagine the unpredictable ways the world *might be*. I seek to accomplish this task by bringing this ancient utterance into dialogue with contemporary articulations of gender and the body and by applying Qoheleth’s words and queer theory to rabbinic constructions of gender and representations of the body.¹ I thus translate this verse as follows, “That which is queer cannot be fixed.” An admittedly liberal translation, it nevertheless fully negotiates the language of the verse.

The Hebrew root *a.v.h.*, translated above as “queer,” means “to be bent,” “to be crooked” or “to pervert/subvert.”² With a similar ring, Eve Sedgwick links the word “queer” etymologically to the

¹ Because there are no rabbinic compilations specifically about gender and/or the body, this essay, by necessity, draws from various rabbinic documents of differing chronological and geographical settings. My goal is not to present a comprehensive analysis of gender or the body in rabbinic literature, but to look for some of the places that queer theory and the study of rabbinic material might meet, as well as to point out where they diverge. My chronological parameters are texts redacted between the third and seventh centuries C.E. All translations of ancient texts in this essay are my own.

² Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 1049.

Latin *torquere*, meaning “to twist.”³ She goes on to point out that “Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive—recurrent, eddying, *troublant*.”⁴ Extending this idea of queer as a continuing mo(ve)ment, I have rendered the latter part of the verse (*lo yukhal litkon*) as “cannot be fixed,” in order to indicate that the “queer” cannot be fixed or made static.⁵ Writing about the Hebrew root *t.k.n.*, Gilbert Rosenthal points out that in rabbinic literature “the verb assumes many meanings and, in fact, becomes one of the most flexible verbs in the language.”⁶ Such linguistic fluidity is at least matched, if not surpassed, by the shifting deployments of the term “queer.”⁷ David Halperin explains that queer “describes a horizon of possibility whose precise extent and heterogeneous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance,”⁸ while for Judith Butler queer “will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes, and perhaps also yielded in favor of terms that do that political work more effectively.”⁹

³ See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), xii. Also see Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews, eds., *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1998).

⁴ Sedgwick continues with the following comment: “The word ‘queer’ itself means *across*—it comes from the Indo-European root *-twerkw-*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *thwart*” (*Tendencies*, xii).

⁵ The Hebrew root *t.k.n.* in the Tanakh means “to make straight,” “to make firm,” “to make right,” and in rabbinic Hebrew “to mend,” “to repair,” “to set in order” (Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Talmud*, 1691). See Gilbert Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*: The Metamorphosis of a Concept,” *JR* 85 (2005): 214–40. Rosenthal writes, “The verb *t-k-n* appears only three times in the Bible, and only in the late book Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). There it means ‘to straighten, to repair, to fashion’” (215).

⁶ Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*,” 215.

⁷ Annemarie Jagose writes, “As queer is unaligned with any specific identity category, it has the potential to be annexed profitably to any number of discussions” (*Queer Theory: An Introduction* [New York: New York University Press, 1996], 2).

⁸ David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62.

⁹ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 228. In an interesting overlap, David H. Aaron applies the following statement, originally written by Elaine Pagels about Christian and Gnostic interpretations of Gen 1–3, to rabbinic interpretation of the same chapters, which I will comment upon later in this chapter: “[they] neither sought nor found any consensus concerning what the story meant but regarded Genesis 1–3 rather like a fugal melody upon which they continually improvised new variations” (“Imagery of the Divine and the Human: On the Mythology of *Genesis Rabba* 8:1,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 5 [1995]: 1–62 [1]).

Queer theory itself is hard to define; it too is hard to fix. As a body of literature or theory, it bursts at the seams, chips away at its own margins, resists a center and sometimes even implodes. Nevertheless, as Annemarie Jagose points out, queer “retains a conceptually unique potential as a necessarily unfixed site of engagement and contestation.”¹⁰ Queer theory constantly contests and questions both the notion of itself—of queer(ness)—and of its apparent opposite—the straight/the fixed/the norm. Queer theory would ask Qoheleth: what *is* queer and what *is* fixed, and *more importantly*, what makes it so?

In the following pages, I set forth a number of rabbinic narrative traditions about some particularly malleable bodies, examining ways in which these subversive rabbinic bodies might contest/resist/call into question the fixed categories of male and female in rabbinic literature.¹¹ By calling these bodies subversive, I draw attention to these bodies as exceptions to and subversions of the majority of rabbinic bodies, which more readily or apparently fall into a male and female binary system of classification. I suggest that the pervasive rabbinic insistence on fixing gender—maybe even especially the gender of these subversive bodies—is evidence not of the naturalness of such classification but proof of gender’s inherent instability.¹² Thus, these malleable rabbinic bodies provide textual spaces, traces or remnants in which normative gender is at least challenged. Regardless of whether these spectacular bodies get squeezed back into the more comfortable zone of binary gender, they undermine that binary system by simply existing, requiring that it be actively and continually challenged and not taken as a given. The subversive bodies discussed

¹⁰ Jagose, *Queer Theory*, 129. Also see Halperin, *Saint Foucault*; and Lee Edelman, “Queer Theory: Unstating Desire,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2 (1995): 343–46.

¹¹ For a discussion of gender and bodily ambiguity in Tannaitic sources, see Sarra Lev, *Genital Trouble: The Figure of the Eunuch in Rabbinical Literature and the Surrounding Cultures of the Period* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2004).

¹² See Sabrina Ramet’s following comment: “Many societies in the past institutionalized procedures for permanent or temporary gender reversal or gender change; other societies, such as the Aztec system and sections of modern Protestant America, have endeavored to enforce a rigid gender system in which nothing may ever change and in which no boundaries may be crossed. The fixation on maintaining fixed boundaries and on suppressing gender change is as much a clue as the prevalence of such change across history to the centrality of this theme in human culture” (*Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures* [London: Routledge, 1996], xii).

below include Mordechai's lactating body, another un-named man who grows breasts and lactates, Dinah's body/sex/gender change from male to female, Abraham and Sarah's bodies of indeterminate gender, the two-gendered body of the first human (*adam ha-rishon*) and the image that *adam ha-rishon*'s body reflects: the image/body of God.

Ultimately, translating Qoheleth 1:15 as "That which is queer cannot be fixed" and using it as a meta-text through which to explore rabbinic constructions of the body, enables one to expose the ancient body—human and divine—as more flexible and fluid than one might at first have expected. At the outset, however, it should be noted that despite the presence of these surprisingly malleable bodies in rabbinic sources, the rabbis of antiquity did, for the most part, succeed in "fixing" gender. The literary traditions that I focus upon, however, serve as evidence that gender was a consistent site of "trouble" and unpredictability, where the rabbis imagined bodies breaking forth from their supposed strict physical boundaries.

Finally, while throughout much of this essay I highlight the positive effects of the very inability of ancient bodies to be "fixed," I will also address another meaning of the Hebrew root *t.k.n.*, which is "to repair," "to mend" or "to improve," quite often for the purpose of "improving society."¹³ Similarly, although I am not suggesting that queer theory can or should be "fixed," queer theory, as Butler and Jagose's statements above demonstrate, is a consistently political endeavor and, as such, it can also be used successfully in the pursuit of justice. In the following pages, I bring queer theory and rabbinic literature together, in a gesture toward boundary crossing—or bridge building—not only for intellectual interest, but also for the very purpose of pursuing justice.

MALLEABLE BODIES

Towards the end of her influential book *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes, "Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* suggests that the very contours of 'the body' are established through markings that seek to establish specific codes of cultural coherence."¹⁴ The coherence of culture is

¹³ See Rosenthal, "Tikkun ha-Olam," 217.

¹⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 128–33.

established by—and thus dependent upon—coherent bodies. Douglas, in Butler's reading, is constrained by a structuralist binary opposition between nature and culture, wherein nature is construed as disorder and culture as order. As a result, "Assuming the inevitably binary structure of the nature/culture distinction, Douglas cannot point toward an alternative configuration of culture in which such distinctions become malleable or proliferate beyond the binary frame."¹⁵

Butler offers a post-structuralist reading of Douglas that questions the coherence of culture itself: "A post-structuralist appropriation of [Douglas's] view might well understand the boundaries of the body as the limits of the socially *hegemonic*."¹⁶ In this view, what constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material; rather, the surface, the skin, is systematically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions. In this essay, I examine exceptional rabbinic bodies in light of Butler's post-structuralist, queer context, where a binary gender system is at least challenged by the apparent malleability of certain bodies. Some, albeit relatively few, rabbinic traditions can be understood to point toward just such an alternative configuration of the body in which distinctions between male and female become malleable or proliferate beyond the binary bodily frame.

I begin with *Genesis Rabbah*, a midrashic compilation of Palestinian provenance dated to the fifth century C.E., where God is said to create the first human as a bi-gendered, literally "two-faced," entity, only later to saw that human in two, fashioning a back for each.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., 131.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *Gen. Rab.* 8.1 (cf. *Lev. Rab.* 14.1). Also see *b. Ber.* 61a; *b. 'Erub.* 18a; *b. Ketub.* 8a; and *b. Meg.* 9a. The uncommon scriptural reference to God in the plural in Gen 1:26, along with the mention of "male and female," motivates much of this teaching: the first human is created in God's image, both male and female. For comparisons of this rabbinic tradition with Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, see Aaron, "Imagery of the Divine" 22–33; and Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. I. Abrahams; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 228–31. See also Daniel Boyarin, "'This We Know to Be the Carnal Israel': Circumcision and the Erotic Life of God and Israel," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 474–506; idem, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (New Historicism 25; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 31–60; idem "Gender," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. M. C. Taylor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); 117–35; and Elliot R. Wolfson, "Woman—The Feminine as Other in Theosophic Kabbalah: Some Philosophical Observations on Divine Androgyny," in *The Other in Jewish History and Culture: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity* (ed. R. Cohen and L. Silberstein; New York: New York University Press, 1994), 166–204.

Thus God creates the first human male-female and then God separates male and female, creating gender. This narrative represents a rabbinic mythic telling of the creation of “normative” gender (and sexuality). Although *adam ha-rishon*’s (the first human’s) two-gendered body is initially and divinely subversive, it is made normative (by God) when it is split in half. Indeed, this divided body is used as *the* norm by which gender is defined and made real. Still, as discussed in detail below, *Gen. Rab.* 8.1 offers other images of *adam*’s body, which challenge such a radical bifurcation between male and female. Indeed, returning to Douglas, she herself reflects on her appeal to a “tidy” binary construction of society, writing, “I admit to having made society sound more systematic than it really is.” She continues with the following observation: “It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a *semblance of order is created*.”¹⁸ And what if, in this rabbinic tradition, the rabbis merely create a *semblance of order*? Perhaps, in this passage from *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, the rabbis attempt to make gender, society, even creation itself, more systematic than it really was/is. This rabbinic myth itself might even be understood as an attempt to create order and continuity between two biblical accounts of creation (Gen 1–2).¹⁹ This radical altering of *adam*’s body might then be seen as an exaggerated attempt to create gender order, which functions simultaneously as an exaggerated cutting and closing off of female from male and a stitching together of the twice told tale of creation in the very beginning of the book of Genesis.²⁰

Before examining other images of *adam*’s body for their possible challenge to a neat binary system of gender even in *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, I will first consider additional rabbinic traditions that at least challenge the ever present divide between male and female bodies. For instance, *Genesis Rabbah* also records a tradition asserting that Mordechai produced breast milk in order to sustain Esther. While I cannot

¹⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 4 (my emphasis).

¹⁹ Biblical source criticism commonly attributes Genesis 1–2:3 to the Priestly source and Gen 2:4–25 to the Yahwist source.

²⁰ For a comparison of Philo, early Christian and rabbinic interpretations, see Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 31–60. Also see Wayne Meeks, “The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” *HR* 13 (1973): 165–208.

assess whether the rabbis thought that some men did indeed produce milk,²¹ *Gen. Rab.* 30.8 nevertheless clearly imagined that Mordechai did:

The Rabbis said: "Every man of whom it is said in Scripture that he 'was' (*haya*), fed and sustained others . . . But did Mordechai feed and sustain?" R. Yudan said: "One time he went to all the wet nurses but could not find one for Esther, and thus he nursed her." R. Berekiah and R. Abbahu in R. Eleazar's name said: "Milk came to him and he nursed her [always]." When R. Abbahu expounded this publicly, the congregation laughed. He said to them: "Is this not a mishnah?" R. Simeon b. Eleazar said: "The milk of a male is clean" (citing *m. Makš.* 6.7).²²

According to this tradition, Mordechai's body (physiology) is changed so that he might suckle Esther. The congregation, by way of their laughter, signals the anxiety that such a suggestion evokes: men do not usually lactate. R. Abahu, in order to prove that Mordechai nursed Esther, cites a teaching from *Mishnah Makširin*. He does not appeal to the biblical verse in Esther 2:7, which presumably could be interpreted as "And he nursed Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter."²³ The Mishnah, in contrast to Esther 2:7, requires no interpretive move; it explicitly teaches that the milk of a male is clean, taking for granted that men might produce milk.

Mordechai's body appears to blur male and female, as, presumably by divine intervention, his breasts produce milk. Although the order/fixedness of Mordechai's body is indeed unhinged here, at the end of the text Mordechai's maleness (and thus binary gender) is ultimately reinscribed. By the text's appeal to *m. Makširin*, Mordechai's maleness is reinstated, because the "milk of a *male* is clean," thereby transferring legitimacy to male performance of female functions, which necessarily affirms the stability provided by maleness in general.

²¹ On male lactation, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), 36, 106, 151. Cf. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Publications of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies 16; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

²² *Gen. Rab.* 30.8 includes Noah, Joseph, Moses and Job as other examples of those who fed and sustained others.

²³ Esther 2:7 uses the Hebrew word *omen*, which connotes nursing in rabbinic literature. For more on this tradition, see Gwynn Kessler, "Let's Cross That Body When We Get to It: Gender and Ethnicity in Rabbinic Literature," *JAAAR* 72 (2005): 329–59.

However, for all that Mordechai's maleness is asserted, his body remains subversive, physically incoherent, which is why the congregation laughs. The text does not bother to mention how the congregation responds to R. Abbahu's citation of the Mishnah. Does it succeed in allaying the communal anxiety and fear about such an odd body? Although the rabbinic attempt to fix gender is played out on Mordechai's gender-bending body, at the end of this text Mordechai's gender is fixed as male, even while his body remains unfixed.

In this same vein, a tradition found in the Babylonian Talmud teaches about another man who nurses his child: "Our Rabbis taught: 'it once happened that a man's wife died and she left him a son to suckle, but he didn't have money to give to a wet-nurse. And a miracle was done for him and his breasts opened up like the two breasts of a woman and he suckled his son'" (*b. Šabb.* 53b). Here again male and female seem to collide on one malleable body. This time the miracle is made explicit: God provides for this man by making his breasts produce milk so that he can nurse his son. This man's similarity to a woman is also explicitly expressed, in contrast to the tradition about Mordechai, which ultimately negates Mordechai's femaleness despite his lactating breasts. This man's breasts open up *like the breasts of a woman*. In this tradition, moreover, his maleness is never firmly reinscribed; of course, it is also never fully questioned. It is worth noting, further, that the very mention of the miracle that causes this man to be able to grow breasts and produce milk assumes gender norms. It presupposes that men do not normally lactate. Although his body miraculously changes, his gender remains male. The text continues: "R. Josef said: 'Come and see how great is this man that a miracle like this was done for/to him.' Abaye said to him: 'On the contrary, how lowly is this man, that the orders of creation (Hebrew: *s'dray bereishit*) were changed for him.'" In this way, the text explores whether the man who receives such a miracle is great or, to the contrary, low.²⁴ The text, more specifically, inquires regarding this particular miracle whether the bodily blurring of maleness and femaleness is indicative of the greatness or lowliness of this man. Readers are left to decide for themselves; the text gives voice

²⁴ However, presumably miracles are usually performed on behalf of those who merit them. See *b. Ber.* 20a.

to either possibility, while leaving the interpretation somewhat ambiguous. R. Josef's comment casts the man as great, precisely because a miracle occurs on his—and his son's—behalf.

By contrast, Abaye's comment, invoking the orders of creation—apparently connoting “nature”—is of particular note.²⁵ It serves as a textual attempt to reinstate the order of gender—the order of creation, nature itself—at the precise moment that gender's and thus nature's order is contested by this paradoxical body. In this reading, presumably the nursing man is low because he has caused God to alter nature on his behalf. Nature, for Abaye, should remain ordered and unchanged. At the same time, however, the talmudic text's appeal to the natural order here again attests to some resistance, or at least confusion, since the text does not refer simply to the “order of creation” but “*orders* of creation.” If multiple orders of creation are thus imbedded in this text, then perhaps this text also offers the possibility, however neglected in this context, to conceive (of) multiple natures. The text thus acknowledges the possibility that the order of nature is not in and of itself given to singular interpretation.

Thus far some rabbis have been able to imagine subversive male bodies that appropriate the normatively female act of breast-feeding. Yet in both cases, despite their bodily changes, these figures have remained male gendered, demonstrating that, while the (male) body might change, (male) gender remains fixed. Another tradition in *Genesis Rabbah* further demonstrates the rabbinic ability to imagine physical bodies as malleable. Like the traditions above, here too it takes a miracle to change a body. In contrast to the two traditions just discussed, however, this tradition sets forth a complete body reversal, which presumably entails both a bodily and gender change, from male to female.

In a remarkable display of body malleability, *Genesis Rabbah* 72.6 teaches that God can change one's sex, even while one is being born and perhaps after as well:

²⁵ The only other place where a similar phrase (*s'dray bereishit*) appears in the *Bavli* is in *b. Sanh.* 108b, where God changes the order of creation by making the sun rise in the west and set in the east during the seven days before the flood. See also *Exod. Rab.* 38.4, which mentions *s'dray bereishit* in connection with God making manna fall from heaven and dew rise from the earth (*Exod* 16:14).

And afterwards she bore a daughter (Gen 30:21). We have learned in a *mishnah*: “If a man’s wife was pregnant and he said, ‘May it be Your will that she gives birth to a male,’ behold this is a vain prayer.” The school of R. Yannai said this is taught [concerning] she who sits on the birthing stool. R. Yehuda bar Pazzi said [the sex of the fetus] can be changed even while she sits on the birthing stool, as it is said, *Cannot I do with you as this potter . . . Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hands, O House of Israel* (Jer 18:6). [“Just as this potter, after he makes a cruse, breaks it and makes another, so too I can do such, even on the birthing stool.”] An objection was raised: Scripture states, *And afterwards she bore a daughter*. R. Yehudah bar Pazzi said to them, “The essence of Dinah’s creation was male but from Rachel’s prayer that said, *May the Lord add to me another son* (Gen 30:24), it was made female.”²⁶

This text, commenting on Leah’s birth of her daughter Dinah, first cites a passage from the Mishnah (*Ber.* 9.3), which teaches that the sex of a fetus is fixed and even God cannot or will not change it in response to a husband’s prayer. The Mishnah does not specify when such a prayer is offered in “vain,” but presumably maintains that this is so at any time during a woman’s pregnancy. The first statement in *Genesis Rabbah*, attributed to the school of R. Yannai, interprets the Mishnaic text to teach that such a prayer is futile only when the woman “sits on the birthing stool” or is about to give birth. In other words, up until the woman is about to give birth, one can, and perhaps even should, pray for the fetus to be male. R. Yehudah bar Pazzi counters the school of R. Yannai, asserting that, even while a woman is giving birth, God can change the sex of the fetus, because Israel is like clay in God’s hands. In response to R. Yehudah bar Pazzi’s statement, an objection is raised: Scripture says “and afterwards she bore a daughter,” thus indicating that the sex change must occur *before* the woman gives birth. Although the objection is apparently raised for exegetical reasons, hinging on the word “afterwards,” it also seems to signal discomfort surrounding R. Yehudah bar Pazzi’s suggestion that even God can play fast and loose with sex at the moment of birth.²⁷ Still, R. Yehudah does

²⁶ Chanoch Albeck, ed., with commentary by Julius Theodor (= Theodor-Albeck), *Midrash Bereshit Rabba: Critical Edition with Notes and Commentary* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1965), 844–45 (bracketed passage added from printed edition). Cf. *y. Ber.* 9.5; 11a–b; *b. Ber.* 60a.

²⁷ *Gen. Rab.* 72.6 differs significantly from parallel sources. The parallel in the *Yerushalmi* maintains that one can pray for the gender of the fetus until the woman

not back down; rather, he marches fiercely forward, applying this up until now abstract discussion to the biblical character of Dinah, shifting the parameters set by the Mishnaic statement even further.

Whereas the Mishnah imagines a scenario where a husband might pray for the sex of the fetus to be male, *Genesis Rabbah* imagines that Rachel, Leah's sister and thus Dinah's aunt, prays for Dinah to be female, so that Rachel might give birth to another son.²⁸ R. Yehudah thus counters the objection raised against his interpretation by asserting, "The essence of Dinah's creation²⁹ was male but from Rachel's prayer that said, *May the Lord add to me another son* (Gen 30:24), it was made female." In the biblical text, Rachel says, "May the Lord grant me another son," after Leah has given birth to Dinah and Rachel has given birth to Joseph. Thus, in my reading, it is at this moment, after both births, that R. Yehudah claims that Dinah is changed from male to female.³⁰

Regardless of whether Dinah's sex change occurs during (or even after) birth, the degree to which male bodies can change in these rabbinic traditions is noteworthy. In this text dealing with Dinah, her sex is quite clearly and completely changed from male to female.

is about to give birth. The *Bavli's* parallel limits the time span considerably, maintaining that the gender of the fetus can only be changed within forty days after conception, and views Dinah's case as a miraculous exception. *B. Baba Meš'a* 87a, however, teaches that God changes the features of Isaac's face at his weaning banquet, so that he looks like Abraham. Presumably, if God can reconfigure someone's face well after birth, God can change one's gender as well.

²⁸ Directly following the text from *Gen. Rab.* 72.6 cited above, the passage concludes: "R. Haninah ben Pazzi said that the matriarchs were prophets and Rachel was one of the matriarchs. May the Lord grant me other sons is not said but *another* son. She said one other will be produced, 'Let it be from me!' R. Haninah said the matriarchs entered and said, 'we have had sufficient males, remember this one.'" Thus Rachel, by way of prophecy, knows that Jacob is to have twelve sons and, if Leah's child is a son, then Rachel will only have one son.

²⁹ Literally, "the essence of its/his creation was male." The *Yerushalmi* reads "the essence of her conception."

³⁰ In his commentary on *Genesis Rabbah* (Theodor-Albeck, 844–45), Theodor cites parallels and earlier commentaries on the midrash, providing previous interpretations of the apparent textual problem. Having found none of the previous suggestions perfectly satisfactory, I offer a new understanding of this text. I believe it to be the strongest reading because it makes sense of R. Yehudah's response to the objection raised against him and because it follows the chronology (regarding birth order) of the biblical text. Theodor suggests that some commentators have understood the verse "May God grant me another son" to refer to Joseph, not Benjamin. Clearly, however, in the biblical text the verse is referring to Benjamin. My suggested reading maintains the biblical birth order and does indeed allow that Rachel is praying for another son, Benjamin.

Still, this text is embedded in a binary system of gender and is thus part and parcel of the hierarchy that such a system encodes. Whereas the midrash is concerned with when—up to what point—the sex of the fetus can be changed, we might wonder why the rabbis invent Dinah's gender change at all. What in the biblical text opens up Dinah to this reading? First, Gen 30:21 states, "And afterwards she gave birth to a daughter and called her name Dinah." Since the verse mentions "afterwards," the midrash asks, "after what?" This question, however, is easily answered by the biblical context: after the birth of Zevulun (Gen 30:20).³¹ In addition, it is significant that Dinah is the only named daughter whose birth and naming is recorded in the Torah.³² The rabbis may well be asking: Of what matter is Dinah's birth—especially in the context of the rapid births of eleven sons? The assumption is, of course, that the birth of a daughter does not matter, at least not enough to take up narrative space in the Torah. The rabbinic rationalization for the Torah's mention of Dinah's birth according to this midrash is that Dinah was originally male and that is why s\he matters. Despite the imagined malleability of the body apparent in this tradition about Dinah, this midrash operates well within the parameters already presupposed by a rigid, hierarchical, binary system of gender. There are, then, only two readable sexes in this text, and one sex's birth is worthy of mention, but the other's is not.

Thus far, subversive rabbinic bodies are all "originally" male bodies. That even Mordechai and the unnamed nursing father from the Babylonian Talmud remained gendered males, even while breast feeding, suggests that these subversive bodies, despite their apparent

³¹ Genesis 30:21 might provoke rabbinic interpretation because, in contrast to many biblical verses that mention that a woman "conceived and gave birth," this verse does not explicitly mention that Leah conceived Dinah.

³² In the entire Tanakh, only one other clear mention is made of a mother giving birth to a daughter: Hosea 1:6 tells of Gomer's birthing of *Lo-Ruhamah*, meaning "unpitied," which provides quite an intriguing intertext for Dinah. Biblical genealogies mention the birth of sons and daughters, but without naming them specifically (cf. Gen 5 and 11). Genesis 22:23 mentions that Bethuel fathered Rebekah, but this mention is embedded in a genealogy. Likewise, Gen 46:17 mentions Serah as the daughter of Asher. However, Dinah's birth and naming is the only example of a female birth story narrated in the Torah. One could suggest that Dinah's birth and naming is mentioned in the text precisely because she is mentioned later in Genesis (Gen 34). This view, however, does not explain why the Torah fails to record the birth and naming of other female figures who similarly appear elsewhere in the narrative.

physical instability, also remain “essentially” male. In the case of Dinah, she is at first “essentially” male (one will recall that the “essence” of her creation was male) and presumably only later does she become essentially female.³³ Is there some way in which rabbinic gender works its way out from under the binary of male and female? Might the rabbis, after all, have imagined an alternative configuration of *gendered* bodies in which distinctions between male and female become malleable or proliferate beyond the binary frame?³⁴

BEYOND BINARY BODILY CONSTRUCTIONS

A brief passage in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yebam.* 64a–b), embedded within a larger discussion about the “barrenness” of the matriarchs and patriarchs, states, “R. Ammi said: ‘Abraham and Sarah were *tumtumin*, as Scripture says, *Look to the rock from where you have been cut and to the hole of the pit from where you have been dug* (Isa 51:1). And it is written, *Look to Abraham your father, and Sarah who bore you* [for he was one when I called him and blessed him and increased him] (Isa. 51:2).” This passage imagines Abraham and Sarah as *tumtumim*, being of unknown, or at least not easily identifiable, sex.³⁵ The word *tumtum* (pl. *tumtumin*) has been defined as “a person whose genitals are hidden or undeveloped; one whose sex is unknown.”³⁶ According to this tradition, Abraham and Sarah apparently lack genitalia or their genitals are undeveloped.³⁷ The exegetical motivation for this tradition is found in the passage from Isa 51:1–2. The text proves that Abraham and Sarah were *tumtumin* by reading both v. 1 and v. 2 of Isa 51 together, somewhat literally, such that the second verse is read as a continuation of the first. Thus Abraham, your father, is “the rock

³³ Although I cannot determine whether this tradition about Dinah’s sex/gender change was connected in the rabbis’ minds to her subsequent rape in Gen 34, if it were, then Dinah’s rape genders her “female” to a striking degree.

³⁴ Rabbinic halakic sources discuss at some length the anomalous *tumtum*, *androgynos*, *saris* and *aylonit*. However, much of the discussion regarding these categories of people is taken up by the attempt to categorize them according to the binary system of male and female.

³⁵ The Hebrew Bible maintains that Sarah was barren (Gen 11:30), but presumably Abraham was not, since he and Hagar produced Ishmael.

³⁶ Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Talmud*, 524.

³⁷ See Rashi’s comments in this respect: “male genitals were made for Abraham and female genitals were made for Sarah” (*Yebam.* 64b).

from where you have been cut” and Sarah, who gave birth to you, is “the pit from where you have been dug.” Alternatively, Abraham and Sarah both had the potential of becoming either the “rock” or the “pit,” male or female, since their genitalia were undeveloped or hidden. The second part of Isa 51:2, “For he was one when I called him,” seems also to be in play in this reading: Abraham and Sarah were one, until their bodies were “fixed.”

Although this tradition imagines the forbearers of the Israelites originally as *tumtumim*, and thus not corresponding to the normative binary categories of male and female, by the end of this text they are made to fit into identifiably sexed bodies. However, there’s something about the rabbis’ ability to imagine their “father” and “mother” as non-normatively “sexed” that should give one pause. There seems to be no stigma attached to Abraham and Sarah’s bodily ambiguity, which they presumably maintain into their nineties.³⁸ Indeed, it is not until they produce Isaac that their physical gender becomes manifest.

While the rabbis imagine their father and mother, Abraham and Sarah, as *tumtumin*, neither clearly male nor clearly female, another rabbinic tradition, mentioned briefly above, imagines the first human as *androgynous*: as being both male and female.³⁹ *Genesis Rabbah* (8.1), however, offers multiple interpretations of the first human’s body and, I suggest, like the mention of “orders of creation” discussed above, it ultimately provides more than one way to imagine creation (this time, thinking particularly of the creation of humanity *and* sex). Commenting on the biblical phrase “Let us make adam in our image after our likeness” (Gen 1:26), the text states:

R. Jeremiah b. Leazar said: “When the Holy Blessed One created *adam*, God created him/it *androgynos*, for it is said, *Male and female created He them* (Gen 5:2).” R. Shmuel b. Nahman said: “When the Holy Blessed One created *adam*, God created it two-faced (*du-partzufim*), then

³⁸ This tradition seems to ignore Abraham’s ability to father Ishmael. Abraham is ninety-nine and Sarah is ninety when Isaac is conceived.

³⁹ Here I assume that the terms *tumtum* and *androgynos* refer to two different rabbinic categories. In Tannaitic halakic contexts there are some distinctions between them (see, e.g., *b. Roš Haš.* 2.5; *m. Bik.* 4.1–2). It is unclear, however, whether such distinctions are apparent in midrashic traditions. Cf. Alfred Cohen, “Tumtum and Androgynous,” *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* 38 (1999): 62–85. As Cohen notes, “. . . both terms are often employed to describe a far more common occurrence, a person born with ambiguous gender signs” (62).

God split it and made it of two backs, one back on this side and one back on the other side.” They objected to him: “But it is written, *And He took one of his ribs (mizalothav) (Gen 2:21)?*” He said to them, “from its side, as you read, *And for the second side (zela) of the tabernacle*, etc. (Exod 26:20).” R. Tanhuma in the name of R. Banayah and R. Berekiah in the name of R. Leazar said: “When the Holy Blessed One created *adam*, God created it as a *golem* extending from one end of the world to the other; thus it is written, *Your eyes have seen my golem* (Ps 139:16).”

The first statement of this part of the tradition, here attributed to R. Jeremiah, teaches that *adam* was created *androgynos*, meaning male and female, as the prooftext makes clear.⁴⁰ R. Shmuel’s comment follows, describing *adam* as “two-faced” (*du-partzufim*), and then proceeds to imagine that *adam* was cut in two halves, which results in backs being fashioned for each “side.” Most often these two statements by R. Jeremiah and R. Shmuel bar Nahman are read for their similarities (aided in part by the parallel text in *Leviticus Rabbah*).⁴¹ Yet in *Gen. Rab.* 8.1 it seems that these statements are set in opposition or at least in tension. R. Shmuel bar Nahman’s splitting of *adam* is indeed a fall into a (binary) scheme of sex (and consequently gender) differentiation, but R. Jeremiah’s *adam*, by contrast, remains undivided.⁴² Finally, the third description of *adam* in this text, attributed to R. Tanhuma, imagines *adam* as a huge *golem*, stretched forth from one end of the world to the other, filling the entire space as if *adam* inhabits the world as a womb.

Although the first two statements in *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, which imagine *adam* as *androgynos* (two-gendered) and *du-partzufim* (two-faced), expressly focus on *adam*’s gender, the third image of *adam*, that of the *golem*, might be understood as referring only to *adam*’s physical size, offering nothing with respect to *adam*’s gender. David Aaron, however, places his comments about the *golem* in the section of his article entitled

⁴⁰ The parallel in *Lev. Rab.* 14.1 attributes this statement to R. Ishmael (Shmuel?) bar Nahman. I focus on only part of *Gen. Rab.* 8:1. See Aaron, “Imagery of the Divine,” 1–22, for comments on the tradition in its entirety.

⁴¹ Aaron suggests that both R. Jeremiah’s and R. Shmuel’s statements are mentioned because the passage is here modeled after the two creation accounts of Gen 1 and 2 (“Imagery of the Divine,” 9–10). He points out the subtle differences between these two statements, writing: “whereas R. Yirmiyah spoke of a single being which had both sexes, R. Shmuel describes two beings created as one” (8).

⁴² Cf. Boyarin, “Gender,” 129.

"The Androgyne of Immense Proportions."⁴³ By framing his remarks with this heading, Aaron alerts the reader to the fact that *golem*, alongside *androgynos* and/or *du-partzufim*, has much to contribute to the construction of sex and gender. In other words, the image of *adam* as *golem* not only suggests that *adam* resembles God by virtue of *adam's* enormity (i.e., appearance)—stretching forth from one end of the world to the other—but also that *adam* resembles God by virtue of *adam's* gender.

The meaning of the term *golem*, however, remains disputed. In an influential essay, Gershom Scholem defined *golem* as an "unformed, amorphous" entity.⁴⁴ Scholem continues, "In the philosophical literature of the Middle Ages it is used as a Hebrew term for matter, formless *hyle*."⁴⁵ Moshe Idel takes issue with Scholem's insistence that *golem* is unformed. Instead, Idel contends that in rabbinic sources *golem* is not unformed; rather, it refers to "the body of a human being" or the "formed status of the embryo."⁴⁶ Aaron rejects Idel's view and further notes that "the common rendering of *golem* as unformed substance or amorphous mass should be questioned."⁴⁷ Throughout Aaron's article, the term *golem* remains untranslated, thus leaving the ambiguity of the word's meaning in play. In what follows, I capitalize on the word's possible meanings, not trying to fix this passage or *adam's* (and thus God's) image, but attempting rather to explore the possibilities this text might offer regarding gender. To this end, then, whether the term *golem* refers to the human body in some cases or to an unformed substance in other instances, I suggest that the term *golem*, in the context of *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, connotes that which is somewhat formed but not altogether finished.⁴⁸ Thus,

⁴³ Aaron, "Imagery of the Divine," 22–33.

⁴⁴ Gershom Scholem, "The Idea of the Golem," in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 158–204 (161).

⁴⁵ Ibid. For the difference between ancient and modern understandings of *hyle* ("matter"), see Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 3–37.

⁴⁶ Moshe Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (New York: SUNY, 1990), 298. Also see Alon Goshen-Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *HTR* 87 (1994): 171–95 (192).

⁴⁷ Aaron, "Imagery of the Divine," 57.

⁴⁸ In this context, *golem* does not yet connote a being created by humanity, as it will in later sources (for a discussion of *golem* in kabbalistic traditions, see Scholem, "Idea of the Golem"; and Idel, *Golem*), nor does it appear that the term *golem* here is considered the opposite of a *hakham* (wise person), as in Tannaitic sources (cf. *m. 'Abot* 5.7; *b. Sanh.* 7.5).

adam is here imagined as “unfinished matter.”⁴⁹ *Adam* indeed has a form, a huge, “world-spanning”⁵⁰ one, but in contrast to the previous images of *adam* that work within a binary system of gender, *adam* as *golem* eludes, and even eclipses, that very system. *Adam* defies such categorization. Imagining *adam* as a *golem* does not necessarily mean that *adam* is ungendered.⁵¹ *Adam* as *golem* becomes ungendered only in so far as the classification of gender depends on bifurcation. If gender might be understood otherwise, which I suggest it needs to be, then *adam* as *golem* allows the reconfiguration of gender itself as “unfinished matter.” *Adam*’s body as *golem* holds out the very possibility of gender undivided, gender unbound, gender in process or potential and gender *becoming*.

If one reads *Gen. Rab.* 8.1 as confined to an interpretation about *adam* and if one focuses only on the first two statements of this passage, then humanity’s separation into and by binary gender pervades this text. Yet if one recalls that this tradition not only comments on the creation of *adam*, but that it also expressly comments on the creation of *adam* “in the image and likeness” of God—thus commenting on God as well—then the bifurcation between male and female becomes only part of the story. The first gender-spanning human, according to R. Shmuel, eventually becomes divided into male and female; the reader knows that *adam* becomes two. As Aaron points out, however, throughout this passage, “The divine image which dictates the human image must be kept in mind.”⁵² Thus, regardless of *adam*’s splitting, God must remain one. By focusing on only one image of *adam* set forth in *Gen. Rab.* 8.1 and forsaking the other two images—indeed even God’s image—human gender norms become enshrined, while the ideal image of God becomes displaced or even forgotten.

Genesis Rabbah 8.1, then, not only offers multiple images of *adam*’s body, but it also provides multiple images of God’s body. As Aaron writes, “the mythology of rabbinic Judaism did not balk at projecting

⁴⁹ Jastrow lists “unfinished matter, a vessel wanting finishing” as the meaning of *golem* (*Dictionary of the Talmud*, 222).

⁵⁰ See Susan Niditch, “A Cosmic Adam: Man as Mediator in Rabbinic Literature,” *JJS* 35 (1983): 137–46.

⁵¹ Even if *golem* means “embryo,” as the tradition about Dinah discussed above demonstrates, the embryo is not lacking gender.

⁵² Aaron, “Imagery of the Divine,” 15.

the human condition upon God . . . I do not believe any of this material is to be taken metaphorically; the sages did not shy away from anthropomorphic depictions in their desire to describe reality.”⁵³ According to *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, clearly God is imagined as both male and female.⁵⁴ Again, as Aaron points out, “In their world of thought, the words *in our image, after our likeness*, must, therefore, translate into some reality. Unencumbered of the notion that anthropomorphisms were inferior or *merely* metaphorical expressions, the literal ‘image’ of God was decoded by considering the visual image of the human.”⁵⁵ In my reading, moreover, the image of God not only includes both male and female undivided, it also opens a space beyond binary gender constructions. As mentioned above, *adam* becomes divided into male and female, but the image of the *golem*, with its ability to embody and translate gender into some sort of “unfinished matter,” holds out the possibility of embracing—indeed sanctifying—gender as a process, a movement, unfolding and continuing. Unfinished matter does not imply imperfection; to the contrary, it connotes matter in process or becoming.

Focusing solely on the first two images of *adam* offered in *Gen. Rab.* 8.1, which are mired in the binary of female and male, ultimately obscures the third image of *adam*—and by implication also the image of God—that this tradition sets forth. Although the rabbis could not imagine an undivided humanity as the norm, they could very well envision their God as always and already One—by necessity undivided. Indeed, according to Exod 3:14, they could also imagine God as constantly becoming that which God will be: *Eh’yeh Asher Eh’yeh*.

Genesis Rabbah 8.1, with its multiple images of humanity and God, thus points to a space beyond the world of binary gender constructions. Continuing to focus on *adam*’s splitting into two—and only two—genders therefore limits both the image of God and humanity set forth in this passage. At first reading, this rabbinic tradition appears to naturalize a binary gender for humanity, but after its exaggerated cutting off of male and female—understood as an attempt to create order—it once again imagines *adam* undivided and, thus, like God.

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ As Aaron notes, “we must remain open to the notion that the deity is in fact both sexes, but still dominated by one sex (as it will turn out, maleness)” (ibid., 25 n. 87).

⁵⁵ Ibid., 62.

CONCLUSION

I began this essay by citing Qoheleth 1:15, “That which is bent cannot be made straight” or “That which is queer cannot be fixed.” Qoheleth 7:13, furthermore, implicates God in the very making of things queer, stating, “Consider the work of God, for who can make straight (fix) what God has made bent (queer)?” My not so subtle insistence on applying Qoheleth’s words to rabbinic constructions of the body and gender are placed in the service of realizing that, for the ancient rabbis no less than ourselves, gender is something that is not easily “fixed,” made static or straight—nor was it created to be so.

In this essay, I have focused on rabbinic traditions about body malleability for the express purpose of exposing, even celebrating, the rabbinic ability to imagine such subversive bodies—bodies that contest and call into question gender’s fixedness, even if often times gender’s fixedness ultimately does resurface in these same traditions. The rabbinic traditions above present some intriguingly malleable bodies, regardless of whether these bodies actually existed or whether they are a product of the rabbinic exegetical imagination. That the rabbis even imagined such bodies demonstrates that, for the rabbis of antiquity, the ancient body—both human and divine—was more fluid than one might have expected, even though this observation arises in and through the very act of their attempting to “fix” (the coordinates of) the body.

The creation of humanity as male and female, first one and then divided, gives voice to a world wherein gender—both physical and presumably also cultural—is neatly divided. Yet rabbinic traditions about males who lactate and even one who becomes female leave traces that these rabbinic bodies were malleable, sometimes proliferating beyond the normatively gendered bodily frame. The proliferation of gender beyond the binary bodily frame is the most profound teaching of *Gen. Rab.* 8.1. Seen in its fuller context, the radical tearing asunder of female from male is only one possible model offered by the rabbinic interpretation of Gen 1:26, “Let us create *adam* in our image after our likeness.” By focusing on only one interpretation of *adam*’s body, interpreters stay firmly rooted in the construction and reproduction of (hetero)normative gender, forsaking the open-ended possibilities of what the image of God and the potential of humanity might more fully entail. But the rabbis imagine

other possible images of *adam's* body and gender that reflect—even mirror—God's image, perhaps indicating that the very separation of male and female succeeds in creating only a semblance of order—only *one* of the orders of creation.

Finally, although rabbinic traditions at times imagine that individual bodily boundaries are not quite “fixed,” rabbinic literature proclaims that it is necessary to fix, in the sense of repair, the *social body*. In the context of Qoheleth, the verb *t.k.n.* is used to express the vanity of “fixing” what God has made bent. In rabbinic sources, the same verb is used with the meaning to improve, even perfect, society. As Rosenthal writes, “*Tikkun ha-olam* may be implicit in biblical legislation and tales; it assumes potentially far-reaching dimensions in the rabbinic world.”⁵⁶ Rosenthal further notes that some of the contemporary far-reaching dimensions of *tikkun ha-olam* have been expressed quite eloquently by Jewish religious leaders. For example, Rabbi Irving Greenberg explains that *tikkun ha-olam* marks “the arrival of the messianic kingdom—when the actual legal, political, social institutions in the world will be structured so that each human being will be sustained and treated as if he or she is an image of God.”⁵⁷ And for Great Britain's Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, “there is no way of specifying in advance the way a life can be a model of *kiddush ha-Shem* or *tikkun olam*, of sanctifying God's name or perfecting society. There are as many ways as there are human lives.”⁵⁸

Both of these contemporary rabbis mobilize the concept of *tikkun ha-olam* in ways displaying considerable overlap with queer theorists' mobilization of the term *queer*. Be it a “horizon of possibility whose precise extent and heterogeneous scope cannot in principle be delimited in advance”⁵⁹ or “the arrival of a messianic kingdom” with “no way of specifying in advance the way a life can be a model . . . of

⁵⁶ Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*,” 215. Cf. his later statement: “Its initial application was limited; its potential, however, was limitless” (220).

⁵⁷ Irving Greenberg, *Living in the Image of God* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aaronson, 1998), cited in Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*,” 236.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Sacks, *Tradition in an Untraditional Age* (London: Valentine & Mitchell, 1990), 132, cited in Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*,” 237. Rosenthal writes that Sacks “confuses the concept of *tikkun ha-olam* with *kiddush ha-Shem* (sanctification of God's name)” (Rosenthal, “*Tikkun ha-Olam*,” 237 n. 101). It seems more likely, however, that Sacks is to some extent equating the two concepts: one of the ways to sanctify God's name is through the improvement of society.

⁵⁹ Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, 62.

tikkun olam,” queer theory and *tikkun ha-olam* point to a world, indeed work to create that world, where justice is pursued to unpredictable places. The ancient rabbis, of course, were not queer theorists, but they imagined the bodies of their ancestors in some remarkably “queer” ways. If contemporary society suffers from a crisis of imagination—the inability to imagine bodies and gender beyond the binary hierarchical classification of female and male—the rabbinic textual record suggests that, at the very least, the rabbis imagined individual bodies in motion and constructed the social body with mechanisms by which to repair and improve itself—continually.

CLEMENT'S BOUND BODY

Michel Desjardins

Understanding is often driven by dichotomies. Is nature or nurture, we ask, primary in shaping humans? Should society be given preference over the individual when setting laws? What pollutes and what makes us pure? These options are value laden. Nurture, society and pollution could line up on the left side of a chart, with nature, individual and purity as their "positive" counterparts. These dichotomies, to be sure, are not necessarily fixed. They can be inverted, as feminists have done by moving "body" from the left side of the chart, so to speak, to the right, or Marxists when they exchanged "individual" and "society," or George Bataille when he gave pride of place to a combination of violence and sex in the process of human liberation. Dichotomies can also be problematized, as quantum physicists do when they question the nature of subatomic particles, including the very separation of objects themselves. Dichotomies can, moreover, be reduced to a single cause (e.g., when people argue that the separation of female and male, including the positioning of men over women, is "really about" male fear generated by the sexual urge).

The ancient Mediterranean world framed problems in a similar way, if not always with the same language. It distinguished demonic from divine, things that change from those that are eternal, the lower world from the upper, passions from reason, hot foods from cold, moisture from dryness and female from male. Some of these binaries may now strike us as odd, but on the whole not much has changed with respect to how we frame our questions.

Clement of Alexandria's mental world was also grounded in the standard dichotomies of his day. Exceptionally well read and open-minded, yet firm in his beliefs, he scoured the writings of his culture for inspiration. First and foremost a teacher, his primary challenge was how best to contribute to the spiritual growth of individuals. Perhaps not surprisingly, the body became one of his main discursive sites. In this respect, Clement adopted and adapted two of the most important dichotomies of his day: the separation of body and

soul, and the separation of spirit and non-spirit within the soul. In this essay I explore Clement's understanding of body and soul and its implications for the Christian tradition that took his teaching seriously. His *Paidagogos* (ca. 200 c.e.) provides a productive entry into the early Christian mindset.¹ It reflects the complexity that could be brought to these issues, including the conceptual boundaries within which he imagined the world. In particular, this work allows us to appreciate to what extent Clement's teaching strategy was grounded in his anthropological assumptions. Constructed by a master teacher who was intimately linked to a long tradition of theorizing about the body and the soul, the *Paidagogos* provides our most extensive guide in the first two centuries to what Christians were expected to do with their bodies. It also reflects Clement's view that a good body is a controlled body.²

CLEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF BODY AND SOUL

Like Paul, Clement does not create an antagonism between body (σῶμα) and soul (ψυχή). He sees them more as allies,³ forming a relationship that can lead to evil or good, disease or health. In his view, the body is neither evil by nature nor a tomb or prison for the soul.⁴

¹ The *Paidagogos* is the second of a planned trilogy. Volume 1 of that trilogy, the *Protrepticos* ("Exhortation to the Greeks"), was meant to entice people to Christianity. Volume 3, intended to lead advanced Christians to *gnosis* or perfection, did not survive, but parts of it may have ended up in Clement's *Stromateis* ("Miscellanies"). In that book, for instance, he advocates a vegetarian lifestyle for more advanced Christians (7.6), while in his previous works he allowed for the consumption of meat (and wine). For more on Clement's third stage in moral formation, see Pierre Guilloux, "L'ascétisme de Clément d'Alexandrie," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 3 (1922): 282–300. The *Paidagogos* was intended to provide practical, moral formation for (newly-baptized?) Christians. Book 1 of this volume establishes a broad framework, describing the role of Jesus in the pedagogical enterprise; books 2 and 3 offer practical advice on daily Christian living.

² The Greek text and French translation of Clement's ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ are taken from the Sources Chrétiennes edition: Henri Irénée Marrou et al., ed. and trans., *Le Pédagogue, I–III* (3 vols.; SC 70, 108, 158; Paris: Cerf, 1960–1970). The Greek text for all three of these volumes is taken from Stählin's second edition, with corrections (see Otto Stählin, ed., *Clemens Alexandrinus I: Protrepticus und Paedagogus* [2d ed.; GCS 12; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1936]). The English translation is taken from Simon P. Wood, trans., *Christ the Educator* (FC 23; New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1954).

³ Peter Brown suggests using the term "consorts" (*The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 127).

⁴ The Stoic influence here seems stronger than the Platonic. For a survey of the

Jean Paul Broudéhoux describes the relationship in this way: "Que l'âme soit la partie la plus noble de l'homme et le corps la partie inférieure, tout le monde en convient. Mais l'âme n'est pas bonne par nature, pas plus que le corps n'est mauvais par nature . . . Ce sont des choses différentes, mais non opposées."⁵ In this pairing with body the soul is master: "The soul, then, ever keeping its thoughts on God and attributing those thoughts to the body by its constant association with it, makes man equal to the angels in their loveliness" (*Paed.* 2.82). Like many in his day, Clement conceives of the soul as tripartite. The unity so often ascribed to the soul in modern parlance evaporates in the ancient world. What makes Clement's concept distinct are the attributes he assigns to each part of the soul and the connections he draws between the soul and the body. Clement's soul contains a reasoning/spiritual/apprehension part (λογιστικόν), which can be infused by God and which he calls the "internal person"; an irascible part (θυμικόν), which he calls bestial, bordering on madness; and a covetous, desiring part (ἐπιθυμητικόν), with its many changing forms, like Proteus the sea-god, often linked to promiscuity and other forms of decadence.⁶ As Clement sees it, then, the soul is made up of both disparate and contentious components.

widespread use of the Platonic body-as-prison metaphor in antiquity (for which the main Greek term used was *φρουρά*), see Pierre Courcelle, "Tradition platonicienne et traditions chrétiennes du corps-prison (*Phédon* 62b; *Cratyle* 400c)," *Revue des études latines* 43 (1965): 406–43. Courcelle's view, that on the whole Clement understood reality in this way, is not convincing. Cornelia J. de Vogel offers a finely-nuanced view of Plato's "body as tomb" expression, arguing that the joining of soul and body for Plato was seen as a challenge to the soul, not really an imprisonment; see her "The *sōma-sēma* Formula: Its Function in Plato and Plotinus Compared to Christian Writers," in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought* (ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus; London: Variorum, 1981), 79–95. Also see John M. Dillon, "Rejecting the Body, Refining the Body: Some Remarks on the Development of Platonist Asceticism," in *Asceticism* (ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 80–87. Dillon explores changes within Platonic thought, including variations in unitary, bipartite and tripartite understandings of the soul; he shows that Plato had multiple views of the soul, including the degree to which the body caused it grief, and posits the *Timaeus*'s "essentially world-affirming" view (85) as Plato's final word on the subject. For further links between Clement and the Stoics, see Jean Dumortier, "Les idées morales de Clément d'Alexandrie dans 'Le Pédagogue,'" *MScRel* 11 (1954): 63–70; for a view that downplays links between Clement's ideal Christian and the Stoic sage, see Victor Courdaveaux, "Clément d'Alexandrie," *RHR* 25 (1892): 287–321.

⁵ J. P. Broudéhoux, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (ThH 11; Paris: Beauchesne, 1970), 67.

⁶ This tripartite breakdown comes from the opening of Book 3 of the *Paidagogos* (cf. Plato, *Resp.* 439D). Elsewhere in Clement's work, the three parts are sometimes configured differently. In *Eclologiae Propheticae* 50.1–3 and *Stromateis* 6.134.2–136.4, we

Two points need further clarification, however. First, in the modern world, reason tends to be defined in terms of instrumental efficacy. In antiquity, however, reason was thought to be a “vision of order in the cosmos . . . To be rational was to have the correct vision, or in the case of Aristotle’s *phronēsis*, an accurate power of moral discrimination.”⁷ What Clement calls “reason,” often using the term γνῶσις, we might call “faith” or, better still, “apprehension.” He is offering a life, a body, driven by this apprehension of the divine. Second, the tripartite soul is bifurcated between the part that leans towards God and the parts that pull away from God. Clement’s description suggests an apprehending part that exists in constant tension with the other two parts of the soul; the former being in need of all the help it can get from the body in order to gain mastery over its inner opposition. The tensions that exist between body and soul, therefore, play out again at the micro level of the soul.

The specific relationship that Clement draws between body and soul helps to clarify his teachings concerning the body. He considers the soul to exist separately from the body. It survives after the body dies, for instance, and, like the angels, never sleeps. In fact, when the body sleeps the thinking of the soul is said to manifest itself in dreams (*Paed.* 2.82). From a twenty-first century perspective, this understanding of dreams offers a fascinating mix of classical and modern interpretations: on the one hand, it replicates the view that dreams are messages from the gods, since, for Clement, the λογιστικόν is the site for God; on the other, it accords with the Freudian view that dreams have a psychosomatic base. Looking at the *Paidagogos*, a second feature also becomes clear: body and soul are interconnected. The body works for the soul and the soul’s health depends on it. A healthy soul needs a well-balanced body so that the λογιστικόν can more easily overcome the other two parts; an unhealthy lifestyle, by contrast, enhances the non-apprehending parts of the soul. In short, the body needs to be properly directed in order to serve the more spiritual segment of the soul.

encounter a spiritual part (πνευματικόν), a bodily part (σωματικόν) and a directing part (ἡγεμονικόν).

⁷ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 21, 86.

Rather than complain about the weaknesses of the body,⁸ then, Clement sets out to make bodies more wholesome. Some of this advice seems ahead of its time, though the reasons sometimes differ (e.g., one should not eat white bread because whole-wheat bread nourishes the body better [*Paed.* 2.3]; one should exercise more instead of lounging around in baths [3.49–52]; and one should eat locally-grown food [2.3, 30]). Some advice is more universal (e.g., do not numb your body with alcohol [2.9–34]; and refrain from eating in a way that offends others [2.31]). And some is now more controversial (e.g., do not drink too much fluid, since that makes you heavy and earth-laden [2.21]). The advice is geared to the male and female social elite, who have enough time and money on their hands to do whatever they wish. While an educated man like Pliny may have written to the emperor from the Roman province of Asia, wondering just who the rag-tag group of Christians were that he encountered, almost a century later it is clear, albeit in a different province, that Christians had made significant inroads into the ruling class.

Clement's purpose in offering his advice was to some extent different from that motivating his earlier counterpart, Paul. In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul encourages Christians to focus on the imminent return of Jesus and to put sexuality to the side, if possible. With the final judgment just around the corner, he says, Christians have a limited amount of time to focus on spiritual matters, so they should not waste the few remaining days establishing relationships. Clement, on the other hand, lacks Paul's apocalyptic and missionary zeal. He prefers individuals to work on changing their habits so that their bodies may become healthier,⁹ because for him a healthier body will lead to a healthier soul and healthier souls, in turn, will help build better Christian communities. Moreover, increasing the health of the body can also benefit the body itself. At death, Clement states, the body disintegrates, but, if a soul has been properly adjusted, the body can be transformed into a spiritual body and preserved. It can become beautiful through the immortality that it gains (*Paed.* 3.2). This is not

⁸ For a discussion of the early Christian tradition depicting the human body as a pale reflection of the divine body, see Patricia Cox Miller, "Dreaming the Body: An Aesthetics of Asceticism," in Wimbush and Valantasis, *Asceticism*, 281–300.

⁹ Clement's view accords well with the spiritual "striving" that is intrinsic to the Muslim notion of *jihad*.

to say that Clement imagines the human body as a pale imitation of an existing, spiritual body; rather, he sees the body as having the potential to be transformed by God into something grander. Just as Mary can be “made male,” and presumably “saved” (*Gospel of Thomas* 114), the body too can be made spiritual—but only if the soul is healthy enough to help generate that transformation. This view again seems to be different from Paul’s, who suggests in 1 Corinthians that all bodies will be changed at death (15:51).

However, a cautionary note is in place here: regardless of specific ideologies put forward surrounding body and soul in the ancient world, the sanctity universally accorded to burial locations suggests that a wide range of people managed to link body and soul after a person’s death. The piety expressed in these gravesite visits was often directed not at some transformed spiritual body, but at the old body, around which people could imagine the soul lingering.¹⁰ In fact, we should also not forget that on the whole Clement’s advice, like that of others, does not tell us much about its acceptance by the person on the street or “in the pews.” In fact, the hortatory nature of the rhetoric in the *Paidagogos* suggests that at least some early Christians would have held different views on the propriety and impropriety of certain actions and the need to change them. What was more likely to have been accepted is both the rough outline of Clement’s view of the body and soul and his claim that morality is based on apprehension of divine truth, since both of those notions were widespread in antiquity.

CLEMENT’S BOUND BODIES

One tantalizing feature about Paul’s “gospel” is that, while insisting on the message of salvation through faith rather than “works” (Gal 3:1–18), he actually devotes considerable attention to telling Christians how they should act. The same holds true for Clement. Although primarily concerned with the development of a Christian’s soul,

¹⁰ Some of Erwin Rohde’s closing comments in *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1925) touch on this important element. Rohde also reminds us throughout his book that the views of the philosophers did not always, perhaps even often, accord with popular belief (525–26). We should thus be careful not to generalize too quickly from Clement’s text to the beliefs of a Christian community.

Clement devotes most of his time in the *Paidagogos* to telling people what they should do with their bodies. The reasoning appears to be that the most productive way to increase people's spiritual health is to have them work on their bodies. Indeed, this book's distinguishing feature is the degree to which Clement seeks to exert control over the nitty-gritty of people's lives. As we will see below, he does so in three ways. First, he frequently reminds his audience how, in the body-soul dichotomy, the body is secondary in importance. Second, he insists throughout the book that God and Jesus are masters over the body. Third, his own rhetorical stance positions him as the next best thing to God that they have. Bodies, therefore, are bound by the soul, bound by God and bound by Clement himself. "Body" may be gender neutral in Greek (σῶμα), but it certainly is given a traditional, submissive female role by Clement.¹¹

Control by the Soul

The body is ontologically secondary in importance for Clement. The soul becomes the heart of the matter, particularly the divinely-infused part. It is immaterial and can continue to exist after the body's death. The body, on the other hand, is material and, as a result, will decay. To survive, it must be changed. The body as it is cannot be saved—just as non-Christians need to be transformed if they are to continue their existence after death. Stated another way, "self," if one were to project a modern term onto this scenario, is represented by the soul not the body. Clement, however, offers a welcome complication (*Paed.* 3.1). He calls the apprehending part of soul the "internal person" (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὁ ἔνδον), to which he ascribes mastery over the "external, visible person," which is the body (ὁ τοῦ φαινομένου τοῦ δε ἄρχων ἀνθρώπου). To be sure, this comparison is not intended to represent two co-equal parts; on the contrary, Clement contrasts that which appears to be human on the outside with that which—in his mind—*really* is human deep inside. The contrast favors the soul. Still, they are both designated as "human" and a link is drawn between them.

¹¹ Cf. the image of a bound female representing fallen Judaism on the Roman *Judea capta* coins that were minted following the first-century C.E. destruction of the temple (see further Davina Lopez's essay in this volume) and the stone carvings of a bound, veiled woman representing the disgraced synagogue found on the outer walls of so many medieval cathedrals (e.g., in Strasbourg).

Another complication is that, while a body can influence its soul, the body is also controlled by the soul that inhabits it—indeed, by different parts of that soul: if not reason, then anger, and if not anger, then immoderate passions (usually a mix of the three). The body is thus pulled this way and that; it does not act independently. The healthier the soul becomes, the stronger its hold will be over the body. Only a weak soul allows the body to control it. Within the Platonic philosophical tradition, this interaction is natural; as John Dillon says of that tradition, “soul should dominate body, and rational soul should dominate irrational soul.”¹² The classic passage representing this view occurs in Plato’s dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades (*Alcibiades* 129E):

- ΣΩ. Ἐτερον ἄρα ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ//So, a person is not the same as their own body?
 ΑΛ. Ἔοικεν//It would seem so.
 ΣΩ. Τί ποτ’ οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος//What, then, is a person?
 ΑΛ. Οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν//I don’t know.
 ΣΩ. Ἐχεις μὲν οὖν, ὅτι γε τό τῷ σώματι χρώμενον//Sure you do; you can say that it is the one using the body.
 ΑΛ. Ναί//Yes.
 ΣΩ. Ἡ οὖν ἄλλο τι χρηται αὐτῷ ἢ ψυχή//So the one using it is none other than the soul?
 ΑΛ. Οὐκ ἄλλο//None other.
 ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἄρχουσα//And the soul rules?
 ΑΛ. Ναί//Yes.

Clement, for his part, perceives two entirely different psychic natures within humans: the “noble and majestic that seeks the beautiful” and the “concentration upon pleasures of the senses: feeding like sparrows and mating like swine and goats” (*Paed.* 3.37). This psychic struggle is inscribed on the body, which is envisaged as the handmaid of the soul.

Control by God

God is there when the body takes on life and he is there when the body loses it. At conception, Clement states, while the receiving body is not yet alive, God injects himself into the soul as it enters the body. As the soul gives life to the body, God slips in.¹³ Clement here

¹² Dillon, “Rejecting the Body,” 82.

¹³ Laura Rizzerio rather dramatically suggests rape as a metaphor for under-

is Christianizing a perspective that goes back hundreds of years before his time, as Erwin Rhode reminds us in his explanation of Aristotle's understanding of the soul:

In the soul of man, besides the vital powers of the organized individual, there lives a spiritual being of more than natural character and origin, the "Mind" [νοῦς]—"that in us which thinks and conceives." This thinking mind is not bound to the body and its life. It does not come into being with the creation of the human organism which is completed by the addition of the Mind. It has no beginning and was uncreated from eternity: it enters into man at his creation "from without" . . . Enclosed within itself it lives its separate life as something quite other than the "soul" (of which it is nevertheless a "part") . . . It is akin to God; it is called the "divine" in man.¹⁴

At death, as we have seen, God either transforms or destroys bodies; ultimate responsibility lies with him. This Father figure, then, inseminates the body and holds the power of life and death over it. He also directs the body.

Clement has a lot to say about how God, mainly through Jesus, the Logos,¹⁵ controls the body through his ongoing guidance: "our Educator is the holy God, Jesus, the Word guiding all mankind. God Himself, in His love for men, is our Educator" (*Paed.* 1.55). After all, he intimates, humans are like untamed horses: God controls the reins and the bit in our mouths.¹⁶ Within this framework, then, God is understood to direct humans via the Bible. This direction, Clement notes, is to be feared (1.8–9), although paradoxically fear itself ought not to be feared, since it trains us (1.62–88). Metaphorically, the Bible is the assigned textbook in the course known as life, with the course requirements based exclusively on that book. Properly interpreted, the Bible gives humans direction, offering clues on how to inhabit their body and on the repercussions should they act improperly: "By

standing this process ("Le problème des parties de l'âme et de l'animation chez Clément d'Alexandrie," *NRTh* 111 [1989]: 389–416). She offers a nuanced discussion of the nature of Clement's tripartite soul, hypothesizing, *inter alia*, that the soul's discovery of its divinity is made possible by the support of the other two parts of the soul.

¹⁴ Rhode, *Psyche*, 493–94.

¹⁵ For a detailed examination of how attention to the Logos distinguishes Clement from the (Middle) Platonic tradition, see Laura Rizzerio, *Clemente di Alessandria e la "ΦΥΣΙΟΛΟΓΙΑ veramente gnostica": Saggio sulle origini e le implicazioni di un'epistemologia e di un'ontologia "cristiane"* (RTAM 6; Leuven: Peeters, 1996).

¹⁶ This image occurs in the "Hymn to the Educator" that follows the main text.

avoiding the sin of those who have been chastised, men will never become subject to the punishment meted out to others" (3.45). There is no choice; there is no court of appeal. Clement also believes that some clues can be found in the Greek classics, but only because, in their better moments, they accord with Scripture and are occasionally even dependent on it (Clement argues, for instance, that Plato learned from Moses [1.36, 67, 82; 2.90]). Fear of the repercussions, therefore, keeps the body in line; particularly pertinent here are the examples from Scripture that depict the punishment of sinners (e.g., Sodom; 3.43–45).

Further, God directs via his son Jesus, who is considered "the only true divine Healer of human sickness" (1.6); he is the mediator who helps people transform themselves into holy, heavenly creatures (1.98). This is represented through a breast-feeding metaphor. Jesus provides us with milk, Clement says, and we suckle at his breast (1.40–52). Clement in fact makes the link with Jesus' passion by claiming that breast milk is actually blood that has been transformed by breasts to feed the babies. Jesus' blood, therefore, can be transformed into breast milk to feed us—a clear case of lactation as salvation. In addition, as witnessed through the Bible, Jesus is depicted as the Logos who has acted through history to guide humans.¹⁷ Proof of Jesus' influence, Clement insists, can be seen in his followers: those linked to Jesus are better trained and ethically more impressive than others; Christians alone can possess true understanding; Christians alone can be good (3.35–36). One need only compare the actions of Christians with those of others, Clement asserts, to see that guidance from above makes humans better.

Moreover, God also directs in stages. This notion too was part of early Christian thinking in general, partly when the Jewish background was considered. For instance, both the Bible and its impact on the Jewish people came to be seen, by most early Christians at

¹⁷ In this vein, Clement promotes a typical Christian hermeneutical stance that also allows hidden references to the Logos to be found throughout the passages of the Old Testament (e.g., *Paed.* 1.5–6). For an appreciation of the work of the Logos in the *Paidagogos*, see the first part of Robert P. Casey, "Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Platonism," *HTR* 18 (1925): 39–101. Casey also argues that what Platonism brought to Christianity, via Clement, was an immaterialist perspective; God is conceived as body-less, linked rather to πνεῦμα or νοῦς. For a modified view of the importance of the body in Clement, and Christianity as a whole, see Broudéhoux, *Mariage et famille*, 66.

least, as a phase in God's divine plan.¹⁸ Within this framework, Jesus represents the ultimate stage in God's direction. In the first section of the *Paidagogos*, Clement tells his audience that, although their heavenly guide, Jesus, has many titles, the one that he will assume for them here is παιδαγωγός or educator. Very quickly Clement adds that Jesus is also fit for teaching (διδασκαλικός), but he will not be assuming that role in this book: "Health and knowledge are not the same; the latter is the result of study, the former of healing" (1.3). That is to say, Clement believes that separate direction was needed to persuade people, to educate them and then to teach them. "Teaching" would take them deeply into scriptural exegesis and the complexities of the Christian faith. Until the body was made well, and the unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν) passions of the soul were healed (1.6), true teaching could not begin.¹⁹

Control by Clement

The *Paidagogos* as a whole, one might argue, offers a finely-crafted rhetoric intended to form the character and soul of Clement's audience. Such training, we have seen, requires putting the body in its place.²⁰ From a broader perspective none of this is surprising, since religion always involves some measure of social control and both gender and sex usually form pivotal points in this aim. It would be incorrect, however, to imagine Clement himself constructing the body-soul relationship or an image of God that makes him master over the body. Others had done that before him and Clement probably takes both constructs for granted. How he chooses to incorporate those ideas in his own work, though, and what else he includes, help to illuminate his distinctive voice. Following are four topics that tease out some of these rhetorical strategies.

First, Clement writes with the certainty of one who, like Paul (1 Cor 2:16), believes himself to have the mind (νοῦς) of Christ.

¹⁸ Clement himself, for instance, contrasts the lesser law "given" to Moses with the truth, which simply "was, through Jesus Christ" (*Paed.* 1.60).

¹⁹ In *Paed.* 2.75–76 Clement begins to delve into a deeper (μυστικόν) interpretation of Scripture, only to stop himself, saying that he has "encroached upon the field of the teacher. Let me once more return to my own subject."

²⁰ For more on Clement's notion of formation, see Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 (2001): 3–25.

Clement represents the reasoning part of the soul and, to a certain extent, also God himself, and he does so with utter confidence, as though he had the authority to tell others what to do with their own bodies—perhaps more importantly, as though others would take him seriously.²¹ He constantly refers back to the Bible for support, but does not give the impression that he searches the Bible for inspiration; rather, his inspiration appears to be innate. Clement, the reader surmises, simply uses the Bible to support what he already knows. At certain points he offers literal interpretations of biblical texts, at other times allegorical readings, especially when the literal meanings do not suit his needs. He picks and chooses passages as he needs them. The Bible becomes Clement's proof text, as it had been Paul's, and most other Christians' as well. To be sure, there is nothing surprising about this stance among teachers in early Christianity, who believed that faith was grounded in the certainty of γνῶσις and divine revelation could be discerned in every word of the Scriptures. In a modern liberal-secular context, however, this approach raises cautionary flags. The caution is partly due to mounting concerns about fundamentalist forms of religion around the world that utilize similar forms of scriptural support.

Second, Clement presents himself, as he did Jesus, as the one who generates life for those who read and accept his message. Just as Jesus represents God as humanity's chief teacher, so is Clement made to represent Jesus. Clement's audience is constructed as his "children" and he nourishes them. As Denise Kimber Buell notes, "Clement relies heavily upon developmental and educational imagery to build this framework. He describes the process of becoming a Christian as analogous to the process of conception, embryonic development, birth and growth."²² Moreover, like Aristotle (but unlike Galen) he describes procreation and feeding as uni-directional: one person is responsible for procreation, another for feeding. Procreation is not really a joint enterprise and feeding requires that the person being

²¹ For strong support on how this pattern of authority was common in antiquity and certainly present in Clement (particularly in his *Stromateis*), see Kovac's following comment: "Clement presents the Gnostic teacher as the image of the Lord, who mimics his creative work and shares in the execution of the divine plan for salvation, an activity he designates by the term οἰκονομία" ("Divine Pedagogy," 6).

²² Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 108.

fed only accept the food. Indeed, Clement's main metaphor for procreation—seed and field (e.g., *Paed.* 2.83, 91)—is itself highly suggestive: “Seed and soil, seemingly such innocent images, condense powerful meanings: although they appear to go together naturally, they are categorically different, hierarchically ordered, and differentially valued. With seed, men appear to provide the creative spark of life, the essential identity of a child; while women, like soil, contribute the nurturant material that sustains it.”²³ This pedagogical model gives us more cause for concern now than it might have a generation earlier. Partly this is because of the important work done by feminist scholars more sensitive to the power of metaphors; partly our concern emerges from the growing influence of critical pedagogy in post-secondary education—an approach that runs counter to the “student as empty vessel” model, emphasizing instead elements of power, voice and authority in the classroom.²⁴

Third, Clement thinks of moral orientation in universal terms. The Christian model for him is not only the best, it applies to everyone (*Paed.* 1.30–32): all are expected to follow a single way, the Bible speaks for all humanity and Clement can instruct all.²⁵ Linked to this belief is his claim, redolent of Ephesians 4, that there are no fundamental differences between men and women: “Let us recognize, too, that both men and women practice the same sort of virtue. Surely, if there is but one God for both, then there is but one

²³ Ibid., 47 (citing Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 8). Buell further notes: “When the seed and soil model for procreation is rendered analogous with the educational process, Clement wields a powerful rhetorical tool for constructing arguments about the legitimacy and authenticity of tradition and the individuals involved in its transmission. The radical asymmetry of seed and soil imagery permits Clement to emphasize the linear transmission of tradition: the teacher as sower plays the active, penetrating role, implanting seeds of Christian tradition into the passively receptive learner. If the soil of the student's soul is fertile, the tradition may be passed on successfully” (*Making Christians*, 50).

²⁴ See, for example, Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2d ed.; New York: Continuum, 1993 [1972]); Henry A. Giroux, *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age* (2d ed.; Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm, 2005 [1988]); and Barry Kanpol, *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction* (2d ed.; Critical Studies in Education and Culture; Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Harvey, 1999 [1994]).

²⁵ See Buell's discussion of the implications of this view; for example: “This type of argument has vastly different consequences according to the relative cultural, social, or political power of its proponents . . . It is a method that reinforces its own naturalness by constantly asking for investigation into origins, but presumes that those origins are unilateral and monogenetic” (*Making Christians*, 9).

Educator for both. One Church, one virtue, one modesty, a common food, wedlock in common, breath, sight, hearing, knowledge (γνῶσις), hope, obedience, love, all are alike" (1.10).²⁶ Viewed through an early twenty-first-century Euro-North American lens, Clement's view resonates both positively and negatively: while the gender equality is refreshing, the one-size-fits all perspective raises the specter of genocidal acts still fresh in our memory.

Fourth, Clement offers a thousand and one pieces of advice concerning the body, no doubt because he believes that others might not be able to tap into the apprehending parts of their soul often enough or deeply enough to do it themselves. As the more enlightened one, he writes so as to give people clear rules and directions to follow. Act this way because I tell you to, he suggests; later you'll act this way on your own and you'll understand for yourselves the reasons for doing so. Partly too he believes that common beneficial actions by Christians, done without necessarily understanding why, will make the whole group more impressive. As a result, the soul will gain the healthy environment it needs to curb its passions and bring itself into focus. In turn, the soul will train the body to do even better. Clement, therefore, is priming the pump—adding a little water until the source generates its own in abundance. He is also following the path trod by other teachers of his day, including scientists like Galen (*Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Passions*) and Soranus (*Gynaecology*), who wrote medical treatises in which self-training and control of one's passions played a central role.²⁷ Like the Stoics of his day, moderation and calm were two of Clement's primary goals: "As was done in Paradise," he says, "we should enjoy things in moderation" (*Paed.* 2.71; cf. 3.51). His ideal Christian is described as gentle and quiet, serene and at peace (καθόλου γὰρ χριστιανὸς ἡρεμίας καὶ ἡσυχίας καὶ γαλήνης καὶ εἰρήνης οἰκεῖός ἐστιν; 2.60). No action is considered too trivial to correct. Some of Clement's advice concerns what we would call manners (e.g., eat with your mouth closed; refrain

²⁶ Despite the overall positive use of γνῶσις, Clement's text, especially book 1, contains an anti-gnostic polemic (e.g., *Paed.* 1.31, 52). Clement is offended that some Christians claim the elevated status of "gnostic" at the expense of others, even Paul, whom they call ψυχικοί. Recalling Gal 3:23–29, Clement points to the possibility of the equal access to γνῶσις by all Christians.

²⁷ For Clement's use of medical metaphors to represent his teaching, see Harry O. Maier, "Clement of Alexandria and the Care of the Self," *JAR* 72 (1994): 719–45 (725–28).

from burping out loud in public). Blake Leyerle, who examined table manners and etiquette in books 2 and 3 of the *Paidagogos*, reminds us that "manners inevitably encode 'a whole cosmology' in which true belief is 'learned by the body.'"²⁸ In Clement's view, manners matter, not only in shaping group identity, but in shaping the soul as well.

Through all of this advice, he is mainly concerned with controlling passions,²⁹ especially those linked to sex.³⁰ Clement supports married Christian life and has a great deal to say, prescriptively, about sex, including related activities that might stimulate what in his view is improper sexual activity. The church's control, he believes, should extend into the alleyways and bedrooms of the nation,³¹ because nothing lies outside the realm of forming the body and liberating the soul. When the goal is spiritual development, the division between private and public life does not exist. Thus, according to Clement, sex should be limited to intercourse between a married, heterosexual couple for the intention of making children (2.83) and Christians should act in ways that minimize the likelihood of other sorts of sexual encounters.³² Women, he tells us, should never wear a purple

²⁸ Blake Leyerle, "Clement of Alexandria on the Importance of Table Etiquette," *J ECS* 3 (1995): 123–41 (141).

²⁹ Brown effectively captures Clement's representation, albeit with some degree of projection: "Clement identified himself wholeheartedly with the Stoic notion of *apatheia*, with the ideal of a life freed of passions . . . It was not as drastic as it might seem at first sight . . . The sage was an artist . . . To 'form' a life . . . involved no harsh buffeting of the body. It was, rather, a process as meticulous, as exacting, and as loving as was the attention that a literary man . . . must give to the right placing of every word . . . It was a polishing away of those ugly excrescences that blurred the true, sharp form of the person . . . Passions were not what we tend to call feelings: they were, rather, complexes which hindered the true expression of feelings" (*Body and Society*, 130).

³⁰ In *Paed.* 2.94 and possibly also 2.52, Clement points back to another book he had written, "On Continence" (*περὶ ἐγκρατείας*), which is no longer extant. Parts of it might be found in *Stromateis* 2.137–47 and all of book 3.

³¹ Christians are not the only ones to think in this way. The supposed harmfulness of sexual activity was a problem that concerned ancient doctors from the time of Hippocrates, and Galen has much to say about this in the second century C.E. as well (e.g., *To Study the Arts* 27–28; *The Art of Medicine* 339–41, 371–72). As John Behr notes, "the popular, hackneyed contrast between the pleasure-loving, licentious (or healthy) pagans and the virtuous, chaste (or repressed) Christians does not stand up to close scrutiny" (*Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement* [Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 4). For an appreciation of how Clement's view intersects with non-Christian thinking on these matters, also see Maier, "Clement of Alexandria."

³² We do not know whether Clement was married or anything about his sexual

garment, "since it invites lust" (2.114–15). They should also avoid ear-piercing and excessive use of cosmetics (2.129; 3.5–14); and they should definitely not dye their hair blonde (3.6–7), since this change is likely to lead to sexual debauchery. Indeed, Clement goes so far as to admit: "I should like, too, not only that it be forbidden for them to expose their ankles, but also that it be made obligatory for them to wear a veil over their face and a covering on their head" (2.114).³³ Lest one think that women are the exclusive recipients of these directives concerning sex, Clement also criticizes men who wear brightly-colored clothes, dye their hair to make themselves look younger and have their hair plucked at barber shops or in public (3.15–25), a practice he links to effeminacy.

Not content with externals, Clement proceeds to offer advice on how often and when people should have sex. It should be done, he says, in the evening so as not to drain the (male) body of energy,³⁴ and only when there is a chance of pregnancy. To emphasize his point, he contrasts rational, moderate humans with sexually promiscuous hyenas, who allegedly have a third bodily orifice especially suited for intercourse, allowing males to have sex indiscriminately with other males and females (2.85).³⁵ Fantasy hyenas notwithstanding, the message is unambiguous: the apprehending part of the soul needs to manage the passions; once managed, the body will have significantly fewer expressions of sexuality. This in turn will lead to increased bodily health and to greater control by reason, until the time comes when sexual encounters will all but vanish. Until that stage is reached, though, Clement sets out to train other Christians' bodies in order to rid them of their "unhealthy" sexual expressions.

orientation. Brown attributes too much importance to Clement's powers of persuasion, I suspect, and also homogenizes Christian views of sexuality when he writes: "Clement's stark insistence that intercourse should take place only for the begetting of children" allowed the pleasure of the bed itself "to vanish forever from late antique Christian thought" (*Body and Society*, 133). One finds the same view in the third part of Michel Foucault's influential history of sexuality, *Le souci de soi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

³³ Cf. *Paed.* 2.33: "Women are not at all to be allowed to expose or lay bare any part of their bodies."

³⁴ For Greek notions concerning ejaculation resulting in physical weariness and for ways to minimize this strain on the body, see Aline Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (trans. F. Pheasant; Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 13–20.

³⁵ This "hyena" passage in the *Paidagogos* was not readily available in English until the middle of the twentieth century. It was translated into Latin, rather than English, in the old *Ante-Nicene Fathers* edition.

We should not imagine, however, that Clement considers sexual expressions unnatural. What gives his message more complexity and makes it more interesting than most current religious discussions about same-sex marriage or the ordination of gays and lesbians is his belief that all humans have a multiplicity of urges generated by the non-apprehending parts of their soul. In his view it is “natural” for people to fly into a rage or be consumed by lust (even for others of the same sex). But what is natural is not necessarily reasonable or in tune with the divine; in fact, what is natural is often counter to spiritual and moral development. Clement, as we saw above, perceives two entirely different natures in humans: the “noble and majestic” and the “concentration upon pleasures of the senses” (3.37). This world-view concerning the relationship of soul and body, then, is what makes moral formation so very important for Clement. It also allows him to be compassionate while at the same time being prescriptive. Clement does not attribute people’s “bad” actions to Satanic influence or to perversity; rather, he attributes them to a combination of their own natures and improper training.

REFLECTIONS

A world-view like Clement’s is directed at removing uncertainty in life. It does so partly by claiming that certain teachers (God, Jesus, Clement) are linked to a higher, spiritual world and that these can guarantee success or salvation if only their teachings are followed. Little is left to chance, at least in the introductory Christian teaching presented in the *Paidagogos*. We should remember that Clement’s more advanced stage of instruction did not survive; he likely would have added more complexity at the next level.

Much has also been written over the last fifteen years about this general topic of control and certainty, pointing to competing claims in the classical world. Either explicitly or implicitly these studies have often been critical of Clement. What first galvanized the discussion was Martha Nussbaum’s seminal study on ancient Greek ethical thought, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*,³⁶ which addressed the role of “luck” in moral goodness—

³⁶ Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1986]). The second edition simply adds a new preface.

a typical ancient concern that has all but disappeared from our modern notions. Nussbaum contrasts “rational self-sufficiency” with “fragility” in her discussion of classical philosophers and dramatists. By rational self-sufficiency she means “the aspiration to make the goodness of a good human life safe from luck [*tyche*] through the controlling power of reason . . . What happens to a person by luck will be just what does not happen through his or her own agency, what just *happens* to him, as opposed to what he does or makes.”³⁷ Nussbaum is critical of moral discussions that do not account for the uncertainty, for the contingent factors, of life. She argues that even in antiquity there were models for living the good life that offered alternatives to rational self-sufficiency. She finds those partly expressed by the Greek tragedians and more fully by Aristotle, who, she believes, for the most part had a different view than Plato on moral thinking.³⁸ Nussbaum’s Aristotle appreciates the complexities and uncertainties that come with seeking virtue. Although Nussbaum does not concern herself with Clement, the implications are clear: Clement’s belief in absolutes and the Platonic confidence he displays in his ability to guide others to truth run counter to what she holds to be most valuable in developing a mature appreciation of life.

A simple response to her thesis would then seem to be: how can Christian moral formation ever give up the certainty that comes with its beliefs? Can Christian morality ever encompass the post-modern sort of ambiguity championed by Nussbaum? According to John Behr it can. In his *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*, Behr comes to the same conclusion as Nussbaum: Clement, he says,

³⁷ Ibid., 3–4.

³⁸ As Nussbaum notes, “. . . the Platonic conception of the life of reason, including its emphasis upon stable and highly abstract objects, is itself a direct continuation of an aspiration to rational self-sufficiency through the ‘trapping’ and ‘binding’ of unreliable features of the world that is repeatedly dramatized in pre-Platonic texts . . . [T]he Aristotelian argument, which continues and refines the insights of tragedy, reminds us that we do not achieve purity or simplicity without a loss in richness and fullness of life—a loss, it is claimed, in intrinsic value” (*Fragility of Goodness*, 19, 421). She further notes that the Aristotelian view offers “a kind of human worth that is inseparable from vulnerability, an excellence that is in its nature other-related and social, a rationality whose nature it is *not* to attempt to seize, hold, trap, and control, in whose values openness, receptivity, and wonder play an important part . . .” (20). Nussbaum does acknowledge (200–33) that Plato changed his ideas throughout his life, becoming more sensitive to life as risk-taking. The main contrast she draws between a Platonic and Aristotelian perspective, therefore, uses these names as access points into broader, contrasting world-views, which gain explanatory force in her broad historical survey.

even as a Christian writer, exhibits an unhealthy degree of certainty and control. Extending Nussbaum's thesis to two second-century Christian writers, Behr argues that Irenaeus, resembling Aristotle, demands "that we live openly in dependence upon God, in the fullness of our created, fleshly, sexual being," while Clement, resembling Plato in this regard, "exhorts us to rise above the vulnerability of our fleshly being in a self-controlled self-sufficiency."³⁹ Behr's contrast is between self-control and vulnerability, a slight variation of Nussbaum's rational self-sufficiency and fragility. In both cases, however, Clement's point of view is assaulted. Limiting vulnerability, accepting universalism and applying severe restrictions on sexual expression are not popular today, so it is not surprising that Nussbaum and Behr both criticize Clement's point of view at this juncture, while looking hard in their fields of expertise to find a clear alternative. Nussbaum's hero is Aristotle, Behr's is Irenaeus. New Testament scholars, one imagines, could either champion or chastise Paul.

Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, written independently of the other two, revisits some of the same terrain, but takes us a bit further—ironically modeling the very fragility and vulnerability treasured by his colleagues. Part of the neo-Aristotelian revival, Taylor explores a series of moral ideals from Homer down to the contemporary period, including various facets of modern identity that touch on what it entails to be a human agent or person. Like Nussbaum and Behr, Taylor articulates with considerable force some of the pitfalls inherent in the desire for invulnerability often articulated by philosophers and religious teachers.⁴⁰

He adds further complexity to the discussion in two ways. First, he argues that ideas of the self have changed considerably over time and that within each period and culture they have always been diverse. Such changes and variations are not appreciated to the same degree by Nussbaum and Behr, who instead seek fully developed models for modern life in early sources. The reality is that neither

³⁹ Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology*, 220.

⁴⁰ Here Taylor denotes his indebtedness to Michel Foucault: "... high ethical and spiritual ideals are often interwoven with exclusions and relations of domination ... [I]n my view, a general truth emerges, which is that the highest spiritual ideals and aspirations also threaten to lay the most crushing burdens on humankind ... From the very beginning of the human story religion ... has been recurrently associated with sacrifice, even mutilation, as though something of us has to be torn away or immolated if we are to please the gods" (*Sources of the Self*, 518–19).

Aristotle nor Irenaeus would fit comfortably into our world. “Reason,” for instance, is no longer associated with a vision of order in the cosmos; our “good life” includes “ordinary life” to an extent that would have puzzled Aristotle and Clement; and our insistence on universal human rights would have struck both Jesus and Paul as peculiar. Taylor offers another example:

Underlying our modern talk of identity is the notion that questions of moral orientation cannot all be solved in simply universal terms. And this is connected to our post-Romantic understanding of individual differences as well as to the importance we give to expression in each person’s discovery of his or her moral horizon. For someone in Luther’s age [or Clement’s], the issue of the basic moral orienting of one’s action could *only* be put in universal terms. Nothing else made sense.⁴¹

A second way in which Taylor adds complexity to this discussion is in his closing plea. He argues that our modern tendency to shy away from universalisms—particularly those articulated by religion—has left us mutilated as humans. Taylor, however, does not advocate a return to traditional religion or to teachers like Clement. Rather, he pleads with his audience to conceive of another way of configuring moral development: “The dilemma of mutilation is in a sense our greatest spiritual challenge, not an iron fate . . . It is a hope that I see implicit in Judaeo-Christian theism (however terrible the record of its adherents in history), and in its central promise of a divine affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain unaided.”⁴²

What would Clement have made of all of this? I like to think that the “teaching” level he had planned for his more advanced students following the *Paidagogos* would have come close to Taylor’s ideal. I also like to think that, of all early Christians, Clement, with his respect for the intellectual and spiritual achievements of others in the Greco-Roman world, might have understood Taylor and sympathized with his goal. But this is probably wishful thinking. Clement was bound by his culture and his religious orientation, as we are by ours, and it is only by a leap of faith or imagination that we are able to resuscitate him (or the others) in order to use them to help solve problems that are best understood in a modern context. Yet what is historical scholarship if not an imaginative reconstruction?

⁴¹ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 28.

⁴² Ibid., 520–21.

ENSLAVED TO DEMONS:
SEX, VIOLENCE AND THE APOLOGIES OF
JUSTIN MARTYR

Jennifer Knust

Justin Martyr has often been grouped with other second-century “apologists” who composed reasoned defenses of the Christian faith. These apologies, it is argued, were designed to reassure outsiders by openly professing loyalty to the Roman Empire and by registering a firm commitment to the central values of the larger culture. According to this reading, then, Justin adopted a friendly attitude toward the emperor and his empire, seeking to persuade educated elites to adopt a sympathetic view of the Christians by explaining their beliefs in a manner that outsiders could both understand and appreciate. Justin may even have hoped to convert the emperor to his cause. After all, the rulers he addressed were more reasonable than most: Antoninus Pius was “broad-minded” and his son Marcus Aurelius had adopted Stoic philosophy as his own, thereby ending the persecutions suffered by Stoic philosophers under previous regimes.¹ More recently, however, this sort of interpretation has been called into question. As Frances Young has observed, it is likely that the opening address to the emperor served as a literary fiction rather than a courageous attempt to convert the emperor or other Roman rulers.² When composing his *First* and *Second Apologies*, Justin had other goals in mind, including the dramatization of Christian suffering,³

¹ Anthony J. Guerra, “The Conversion of Marcus Aurelius and Justin Martyr: The Purpose, Genre, and Content of the First Apology,” *SecCent* 9 (1992): 171–87; see also Robert M. Grant, “Five Apologists and Marcus Aurelius,” *VC* 42 (1988): 1–17. For examples of these sorts of readings of Justin and the other “apologists,” see Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); Leslie William Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); and idem, *Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic* (ThH 18; Paris: Beauchesne, 1972).

² Frances Young, “Greek Apologists of the Second Century,” in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (ed. M. J. Edwards, M. Goodman and S. R. F. Price; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 81–104; and Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1:310.

³ See Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995), esp. 114–20; and Elizabeth A. Castelli,

the production of Christian difference⁴ and the disciplining of the (true) Christians whom, he claimed, were exceptionally friendly and chaste. Justin did indeed appeal to the reason of the emperor, exhorting the Romans to be pious and moderate in their dealings with the Christians, but he also presented a pointed critique of imperial corruption, couching this criticism in terms of sexual and religious misbehavior. The emperor, Justin suggested, had allowed himself to be enslaved by demons and desire. As such, true reason, piety and moderation would remain elusive, if not impossible, since without Christ full λόγος (reason) could not be attained.

In this essay I continue the current reconsideration of Justin's *Apologies* by reexamining the charges he lodged against his Roman rulers. Justin's rhetoric, his presentation of himself as a "philosopher" and a Christian, his claims about the "manly" endurance of Christians as they faced torture and death and his depiction of Jesus as both lawgiver and guardian of "good morals" participated in a gendered discourse that associated manliness with reason, piety and control of the self and others. Still, Justin shifted the discourse to assert that Christians—men and women alike—were both manly and free, and he did so despite (or because of) appearances to the contrary. Exposed for public display, accused of human sacrifice and orgiastic rituals, Christians, it could be argued, were hardly "men" at all. Justin countered these charges by arguing that Christians control their desires and fully possess λόγος; by contrast, the demons and their "slaves"—including the Romans—revel in illicit desire, demand bloody sacrifice, succumb to irrational passion and fail to exercise justice. Justin, then, was no friend of the emperor. Instead, he positioned himself and the Christians he sought to represent as a beleaguered, unjustly punished and pious γένος (race, ethnicity) that would, he argued, be vindicated in the end. The vehemence and specificity of this attack becomes clear when placed within the sexualized rhetoric that bolstered and justified imperial privilege.

Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making (Gender, Theory, and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 33–35, 47–49, 197–200.

⁴ See especially Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e–III^e siècles* (2 vols.; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 1:11–19, 40–91. Also see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), esp. 37–73; and Rebecca Lyman, "The Politics of Passing: Justin Martyr's Conversion as a Problem of 'Hellenization,'" in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing* (ed. K. Mills and A. Grafton; Studies in Comparative History; New York: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 36–60.

SEX AND EMPIRE

Recent analyses of Roman imperial policy have demonstrated that Roman identity was defined and defended, in part, by moral and legal discourses that targeted certain sexual relationships and certain types of sex. As Catherine Edwards has shown, accusations of sexual immorality were employed by Roman elites to define, constitute and police “Romanness.” Justifying privilege by pointing to their supposedly superior self-mastery, Romans such as Cicero, Pliny the Elder and Octavian (Augustus) defended their status as “true Romans” and identified their rivals as victims of *incontinentia* and slaves of *licentia* and *luxuria*.⁵ Roman sexualized invective, Edwards argues, was central to the “agonistic rituals of Roman political life.”⁶ Designed to marginalize and exclude, moralizing accusations regarding the decadence and self-indulgence of target members of the Roman elite justified the dominant position of some who were said to embody proper Roman virtue at the expense of others. As such, invective was “deployed in the pursuit of non-sexual (as well as sexual) ends.”⁷ For example, prior to the battle of Actium, Antony and Octavian relentlessly denounced one another, each claiming that the other was a luxury-loving, incontinent adulterer; once Octavian emerged victorious, he aimed to consolidate and validate his new authority by means of a program of moral reform, including his (in)famous marriage legislation.⁸ Sexual slander and the control of sexual behavior thus became fundamental strategies of Roman rule.⁹

⁵ Catherine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Also see Mary Rose D’Angelo’s essay in this volume.

⁶ Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 34–62. On Octavian and Antony, also see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (trans. A. Shapiro; Jerome Lectures 16; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 57–65; Maria Wyke, “Augustan Cleopatras: Female Power and Poetic Authority,” in *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus* (ed. A. Powell; London: British Classical Press, 1992), 98–140; Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990); and Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), esp. 270–77. On the possible functions of the Augustan marriage legislation, see Leo Ferrero Raditsa, “Augustus’ Legislation Concerning Marriage, Procreation, Love Affairs and Adultery,” *ANRW* 2.13:278–339; and Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 292–98.

⁹ For an interesting comparison, see the groundbreaking work of Ann Stoler on the importance of sexualized discourses to European imperial policy and rule. As she demonstrates, sexual practices, discourses about sexual practices and gendered

After tracing Roman laws pertaining to prostitution, adultery and pimping from the promulgation of Augustus's marriage legislation down to third-century commentary by Roman jurists, Thomas McGinn observes that, although there was no consistent "law on prostitution," there was a tendency within Roman legal discourse to classify and to defend honored status by reiterating the degraded status of prostitutes.¹⁰ Prostitutes served to symbolize sexual shame, demarcating "respectable" from "nonrespectable" women, and thus "respectable" women—not prostitutes or adulteresses—seem to have been the true target of the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, one of the marriage laws promulgated by Augustus. This law reaffirmed the traditional equation of social dignity and sexual continence, reminding women of the debased status that awaited them should they fail to "live up to the standard of the *mater familias*." At the same time, however, this law officially exempted women of low status from the legal penalties associated with prostitution and promiscuous sex, thereby providing Roman men with a "permissible sexual outlet outside marriage."¹¹

The symbolic weight of laws regarding prostitution, therefore, was at least as important as the legal disabilities and penalties imposed. Simultaneously, this discourse regulated the sexual lives of Romans and their subordinates, developing an elaborate disciplinary apparatus that used sex to define status and gender. Sex was invoked to defend the superiority and distinctiveness of Roman gentlemen and their marriage partners, legislating a double-standard that reaffirmed male control while defining certain people as outside the realm of sexual morality altogether.

claims about the relative sexual morality of colonizer and colonized reinforced and maintained European privilege in complex ways, with economic, political and practical consequences for both the colonizers and the colonized. Attempts at policing sexual practices, complemented by gendered claims about the fundamental sexual and racial natures of native and European women and men, worked to define the parameters of both European and native identity while simultaneously defending privileged hierarchies that made imperial rule possible. See Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); idem, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); idem, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," *CSSH* 34 (1992): 514–51; and idem, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," *CSSH* 31 (1989): 134–61.

¹⁰ Thomas A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. 23–69, 147–56, 208–15, 338–43.

¹¹ Ibid., 214.

In this way, Roman marriage law regulated and defined those who could be counted as “respectable” or “truly Roman”; these laws also defined by exclusion, prescribing who could marry whom and under what circumstances. Prostitutes and pimps could not legally marry free Roman men; slaves, freed slaves and provincials were also explicitly excluded from contracting legal Roman marriages. They could, however, engage in sexual relationships with free Roman men or, perhaps more accurately, free Roman men could engage in sexual unions with them. For example, a Roman senator could engage in a long-term sexual relationship with a freedwoman or a Roman governor with a provincial woman, but neither couple could marry, at least in a legal sense. Instead, the woman in each case became the man’s concubine (*concubina*). As such, she was expected to remain sexually loyal to her patron—she could, in fact, be charged with adultery—but any children born from the union followed her status not his.¹² Legally speaking, slaves could not marry one another or anyone else, children born to slave women were slaves at birth and slaves’ bodies were the property (sexual and otherwise) of their masters.¹³ This rehearsal of Roman marriage law is not intended to serve as a gauge of actual practice—legal discourse is prescriptive, not descriptive—but to point out that Romans employed a variety of strategies to enact difference between themselves and those whom they ruled or owned, including a regulatory system that sorted potential marriage partners by means of a juridical discourse of legal and extra-legal sexual unions. In each case, the superior privilege of the Roman elite was naturalized, assumed and promoted.¹⁴

¹² Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 51–57. Such unions would not have *conubium* and were therefore extra-legal for the purposes of property and inheritance. Also see Paul R. C. Weaver, “Children of Freedmen and Freedwomen,” in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children in Ancient Rome* (ed. B. Rawson; Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 66–90.

¹³ See especially Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Cf. Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); idem, “On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding,” *Slavery and Abolition* 8 (1987): 42–64; and Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 52–54. Some slaves did “marry,” or at least they presented themselves as married in commemorative inscriptions.

¹⁴ On the ideological and political functions of discourses of Roman “manliness,” including claims about “manly” sexual self-mastery, see Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

“Romanness,” however, was not the only identity category constructed, at least in part, on the basis of sexual practices and discourses about sex. “Christianness” was also construed in various ways and in part by means of a sexualized rhetoric. Ancient Christians frequently characterized their movement in sexual terms, associating devotion to Christ with the control of desire.¹⁵ From the obscure comment in the Gospel of Matthew that some have made themselves “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven” (19:12) to the celebration of the 144,000 (male) virgins who did not “defile themselves with women” in the book of Revelation (14:4), the insistence that (true) Christians are sexually pure pervades early Christian literature. Paul, disciples of Paul, Ignatius and Polycarp all warned against tolerating anything that might resemble improper sexual behavior among “the saints.”¹⁶ Aristides, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch and other second-century c.e. Christians boasted of the unique self-mastery of the Christians, especially the continent who never engage in sexual activity at all.¹⁷ The apocryphal Acts of the Apostles detail the heroic efforts of elite Christian women to remain sexually continent despite the demands of family and city.¹⁸ In short,

¹⁵ For a fuller treatment of these issues, see Jennifer Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (Gender, Theory and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); cf. Virginia Burrus, “Reading Agnes: The Rhetoric of Gender in Ambrose and Prudentius,” *J ECS* 3 (1995): 25–46; Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, “Asceticism and Anthropology: *Enkrateia* and ‘Double Creation’ in Early Christianity,” in *Asceticism* (ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 127–46; and Peter Brown, *Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

¹⁶ For example, the author of Ephesians argues that the brothers and sisters in Christ had put aside their “old humanity” (παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) by rejecting “deceptive desire” (ἐπιθυμία τῆς ἀπάτης; Eph 4:22). Similarly, the author of Titus reminds his audience that previously they had been “foolish, disobedient, deceived, slaves to various desires and pleasures, leading our lives in wickedness and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (3:3); now that they follow Christ, however, the grace of God trains them to live moderately (σωφρόνως) and justly (δικαίως) while they wait patiently for the Christ’s return (2:12). See also 1 Cor 5:1–13; Col 3:5–7, 18–25; 1 Tim 2:8–15; 3:2–7, 12; 5:11–16; 2 Tim 3:2–9; Ignatius, *Pol.* 5.1–2; and Polycarp, *Phil.* 4.2–3; 5.3.

¹⁷ Cf. Aristides, *Apol.* 15; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 32.2–5; 33.1, 4–5; Tatian, *Or.* 33; Theophilus, *Autol.* 13; and Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.

¹⁸ For English translations of the apocryphal Acts, see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in English Translation* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 229–536. For discussion of these texts, especially as they pertain to the place of women in earliest Christianity, see Virginia Burrus, *Chastity*

although Christians quarreled about the content of an ideal sexual morality, they agreed that true devotion to Christ made it impossible to engage in sexual immorality, at least in theory.¹⁹ Justin Martyr was no exception.

Following a summary of Jesus' teachings regarding sexual desire, adultery and marriage—identified here as teachings about σωφροσύνη (moderation, self-mastery)²⁰—Justin offers the following celebration of Christian chastity: “And many, both men and women, who have been Christ’s disciples from childhood, have preserved their purity at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I am proud that I could produce such from every race of men and women. For what shall we say of the countless multitude of those who have turned away from intemperance (ἀκολασία; “licentiousness”) and learned these things?” (*1 Apol.* 15.6–7).²¹ Justin then represents those outside of his

as *Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Studies in Women and Religion 23; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1987); Elizabeth A. Castelli, “Virginity and Its Meaning for Women’s Sexuality in Early Christianity,” *JFSR* 2 (1986): 61–88; Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Shelly Matthews, “Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography,” *JFSR* 17 (2001): 39–55.

¹⁹ For example, the author of the Pastorals argues that self-discipline should be practiced within the household, with women, children and slaves obeying the men who legitimately control them, and with free men governing their own desires while they hold the behavior of subordinates in check. Sexual morality in this context did not allow for young women to remain unmarried. Contrast this position to that of the authors of the apocryphal Acts, who celebrated celibacy for young women. For further discussion, see Jouette Bassler, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 26–27, 30–31, 34, 55–71, 78–82, 92–98, 102–7, 191–98; Gail Corrington Streeter, “Askesis and Resistance in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *The New Testament and Asceticism* (ed. L. E. Vaage and V. L. Wimbush; New York: Routledge, 1998), 299–316; and Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983). Tatian and Irenaeus also radically disagreed regarding Christian marriage; for Tatian, marriage was incompatible with a fully Christian life (*On Perfection* fr. 5 = Clement, *Strom.* 3.81.1.1–2), while for Irenaeus an outright rejection of marriage involved a presumptuous rejection of God’s creation (*Haer.* 1.28.1). Despite these apparent differences, they still both persistently contrasted the propriety of Christian sexual behavior with the purported sexual impropriety of their enemies (Tatian, *Or.* 22; 33; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.6.3; 1.13.3; 5.8.2–4).

²⁰ On the importance of this virtue, see especially Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966).

²¹ The English translation is taken from Leslie William Barnard, *St. Justin Martyr: First and Second Apologies* (ACW 56; New York: Paulist, 1997); the Greek text is edited by Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten: Texte mit kurzen Einleitungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914). Justin does not cite any Gospel book explicitly and phrases Jesus’ teachings in unique ways. Still, versions of these same teachings

Christian community as enslaved to desire, a problem he associates with the worship of profligate and bloodthirsty gods identified as “demons” (δαιμόνια).²² Justin goes on to argue that Roman rulers bestow rewards and honors on those who worship Zeus and follow his incestuous example (*I Apol.* 4), being led by unreasonable passion (ἄλογος πάθος) to persecute those who speak the truth (*I Apol.* 5). Indeed, the artisans who build temples and shape the statuary designed to honor these “gods” are as licentious as the gods/demons they seek to honor (*I Apol.* 9). “You” (emperor, sons, Senate), Justin taunts, expose infants, producing a steady supply of children to be reared for the purposes of prostitution; as a result, the father of an exposed child may unknowingly visit his own sire to sate his promiscuous lusts, thereby committing incest and engaging in πορνεία, sexual immorality, fornication (*I Apol.* 27).²³ He concludes as follows: “Indeed the things which you [the emperor, his heirs and the Roman Senate] do openly and with applause, as if the divine light were overturned and extinguished, these you charge against us; which in truth does no harm to us who shrink from doing any of these things, but rather to those who do them and bear false witness [against us]” (*I Apol.* 27). Justin, it would seem, was neither convinced that “Romanness” implied sexual self-mastery nor persuaded that his rulers promoted morality among their subjects.

THE REASON OF THE EMPEROR

Justin begins his *First Apology* with an appeal to imperial clemency and his supplementary *Second Apology* opens with a reference to the reasonableness of the Roman citizenry. He also recalls certain famous philosophers in these writings, seeking to describe points of similarity

are preserved in the Synoptic Gospels, including the statement that some make themselves “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven” (cf. Matt 19:11–12).

²² On the significance of Justin’s decision to label these gods “demons,” see Elaine Pagels, “Christian Apologists and the ‘Fall of the Angels’: An Attack on Roman Imperial Power,” *HTR* 78 (1985): 301–25; and Annette Yoshiko Reed, “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr,” *J ECS* 12 (2004): 141–71.

²³ Cf. Tatian, *Or.* 28. As William Harris remarks, “[Justin] wanted to turn the charge back on the accusers, and as far as reproduction and sexuality were concerned, child-exposure was their most vulnerable point . . . This was a rhetorical dispute, but one of some importance in the struggle of Christians to dominate the sphere of sexuality” (“Child Exposure in the Roman Empire,” *JRS* 84 [1994]: 1–22 [11]).

between their teachings and those of the Christians.²⁴ Still, Justin's discussion of the philosophers does not seek to reconcile Christianity with philosophy per se; rather, his argument proposes an essential difference between Christianity and the cultural contexts within which Christians operated. Rhetorical moves aside, Justin obviously could not and did not actually stand outside of his culture.²⁵ Instead, we can see him attempting to reconfigure "truths" current among his contemporaries to argue that all truth, since it must come from (his) God, was in fact Christian truth, an argument that represents both a resistance to and a negotiation of presuppositions he shared with his contemporaries.²⁶ A discussion of the similarities between the teachings of Jesus and those of the philosophers may have been designed to allay the concerns of educated Christians facing increased pressure from hostile outsiders. After all, Christianity was viewed by most "as a suspiciously alien culture" and educated Christians may have required a set of reasons capable of preventing them from abandoning ship during what had become difficult times.²⁷ Justin addressed these difficult times in other ways as well: his principal argument regarding non-Christian philosophers—those who managed to teach even some semblance of truth were often persecuted—served to emphasize the tremendous and unjustified wrong Christians were suffering, a central theme of the *Apologies*.²⁸ In other words, Justin did not simply describe Christianity in terms of philosophy; he offered tepid praise of certain "pagan" philosophers so that he could associate their sufferings with his own.

²⁴ On Justin's interest in Greek philosophy, see Robert Joly, *Christianisme et Philosophie: Études sur Justin et les Apologues grec du deuxième siècle* (Paris: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1973), 9–78; Mark J. Edwards, "On the Platonic Schooling of Justin Martyr," *JTS* 42 (1991): 17–34; and Arthur Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture* (HUT 26; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 49–71.

²⁵ See Rebecca Lyman, "2002 NAPS Presidential Address: Hellenism and Heresy," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 209–22; and idem, "Politics of Passing," 37–46.

²⁶ See Lyman, "Hellenism and Heresy"; cf. Tessa Rajak, "Talking at Trypho: Christian Apologetic as Anti-Judaism in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*," in Edwards, Goodman and Price, *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, 58–80. Rajak observes that Justin discussed Platonism at length in his *Dialogue*, only then to dismiss it (67).

²⁷ Young, "Greek Apologists," 81.

²⁸ So, for example, the philosophers Heraclitus and Musonius Rufus were offered as proofs of the principle that those who strive "to live by logos and to shun vice" will be attacked by demonically inspired rulers, even if all they possessed was a "seed of logos" rather than the fullness of Logos/Christ, which belongs to Christians alone (2 *Apol.* 8). For further discussion, see Robert M. Price, "Are There 'Holy Pagans' in Justin Martyr?," *StPatr* 31 (1997): 153–69.

Appeals to imperial clemency and reason highlighted the injustice of the persecution endured by Christians, actively commemorating—and probably exaggerating—Christian suffering.²⁹ By embracing the violence perpetrated against them, Christian authors such as Justin subverted the meaning of that violence, transforming the violation of Christian bodies from a mark of shame into a badge of honor.³⁰ For Justin, the Christian body in pain offered proof of the perseverance, endurance and “manliness” that was made possible through Christ.³¹ As he states in the *Second Apology*,

For I myself too, when I was delighting in the teachings of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death, and of all other things which are counted fearful, saw that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness or pleasure (φιληδονία). For what sensual (φιλήδονος) or intemperate (ἀκρατής) person, or whoever counts it good to feast on human flesh, could welcome death that he might be deprived of his enjoyments, and would not rather always continue the present life, and try to escape the observation of rulers? (2 *Apol.* 12)

In other words, their bravery in the face of death demonstrated that Christians could not be lovers of pleasure or wicked in any other way;³² rather, they had mastered themselves, facing both death and

²⁹ Keith Hopkins, “Christian Number and Its Implications,” *JECs* 6 (1998): 185–226 (196); but cf. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 38: “It may be precisely because of the unpredictability of persecution as a practice that it came to loom even more largely in the Christian imagination.”

³⁰ See Perkins, *Suffering Self*, 114–20; and Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, esp. 33–35, 47–49. On the shame of bodily violation, see David Potter, “Martyrdom as Spectacle,” in *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (ed. R. Schodel; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 53–88, esp. 65–66; Kathleen M. Coleman, “Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments,” *JRS* 80 (1990): 44–73 (55–58); Peter Garnsey, “Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire,” in *Studies in Ancient Society* (ed. M. I. Finley; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 141–65; and idem, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 164–65. The Roman jurists discussed the status-specific nature of bodily punishments; see, e.g., *D* 48.19.8.2 (Ulpian); 48.19.10.2 (Macer); 48.19.16.6 (Claudius Saturninus); 48.19.28.2 (Callistratus).

³¹ Female Christian martyrs could therefore be described as becoming even more “manly” than their persecutors, enduring whatever tortures non-Christian men chose to inflict upon them. Still, as Castelli points out, the fact that women could also be tortured and killed—and valorized as “manly” for doing so—“is a faint and, indeed, Pyrrhic victory in the struggle for gender equality” (*Martyrdom and Memory*, 59–67, citation from 67).

³² Cf. *1 Apol.* 26, where Justin reports that some false Christians may “commit the shameful deeds about which stories are told—the upsetting of the lamp, promis-

desire with courageous resolve, a theme to which Justin returns on several occasions.

Justin's writings called attention to the injustice perpetrated against the Christians; they also defined the Christians as different from, and superior to, other groups. In his important reconsideration of second- and third-century heresiology, Alain Le Boulluec observes that Justin's denunciation of "the heretics" implied a scheme of classification that measured heretics according to a sliding (imaginary) scale, from "too Jewish" to "too Greek." True Christians were neither Jewish nor Greek, Justin suggested, but something else, something better. In the process, Justin represented the contested, overlapping categories "Christian," "Jew" and "Greek" as distinct and bounded.³³ As Annette Yoshiko Reed has shown, Justin's denunciations of the "demons" worked in similar ways, defining the borders of his movement over against three groups—pagans, Jews and heretics—by suggesting that each were demonically inspired.³⁴

In his *Apologies*, then, Justin called attention to the unjust suffering of the Christians, manufactured difference between Christians and others, be they Jews, Greeks, pagans or heretics, and, as I will show, also offered a pointed critique of the rulers of Rome by means of a gendered sexualized discourse denouncing imperial depravity and heralding Christian sexual purity. Justin, like his Roman rulers, developed a regulatory scheme that defined Christianness in terms of sexual practice and excluded outsiders in terms of perceived categories of sexual depravity.

cuous intercourse and eating human flesh." On the charge of cannibalism, see Andrew McGowan, "Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism against Christians in the Second Century," *J ECS* 2 (1994): 413–42; and James B. Rives, "Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians," *JRS* 85 (1995): 65–85. On the charge that Christians held orgiastic banquets, see Albert Henrichs, "Pagan Ritual and the Alleged Crimes of the Early Christians: A Reconsideration," in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (ed. P. Granfield and J. A. Jungmann; 2 vols.; Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 1:18–35.

³³ Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie*, 40–91. On the use of this sort of scale in later heresiological literature, see Averil Cameron, "Jews and Heretics—A Category Error?," in *The Ways That Never Parted* (ed. A. H. Becker and A. Yoshiko Reed; TSAJ 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 345–60; and idem, "How to Read Heresiology," *JMEMS* 33 (2003): 471–92. Daniel Boyarin adopts a similar perspective in his reading of Justin's treatment of "the Jews" (*Border Lines*, 40–44, 72–73).

³⁴ Yoshiko Reed, "Trickery of the Fallen Angels," 154.

THE SEX LIVES OF DEMONS AND THEIR SLAVES

Justin's *Apologies* blame the emperor and other Roman rulers for their wicked persecutions of Christians and do so in familiar ways. The (fictional) opening address to Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verrus and the Roman Senate in the *First Apology* and to the citizens of Rome in the *Second Apology* serve to heighten the intensity of the critique to follow; they also reveal Justin's familiarity with the conventions of classical rhetoric.³⁵ Good rulers, Justin argues, judge in accordance with piety (εὐσέβεια) and philosophy;³⁶ they investigate accusations made and thus govern by reason not passion (*1 Apol.* 1). These sorts of claims are endemic to ancient oratory. Theon, a first-century teacher of rhetoric, instructed his students to enumerate the wisdom, piety, moderation, courage, justice, nobility and liberality of persons they sought to praise; praiseworthy men possess praiseworthy qualities such as courage in the face of danger and a willingness to act in the public interest.³⁷ A later, third-century rhetorician recommended that rulers be praised for their temperance, justice and wisdom, noting that by displaying these virtues those in power promote good behavior among their subjects.³⁸ Advice of this sort was taken to heart, with clichés regarding the remarkable wisdom, piety and moderation of the emperor and other rulers repeated in a variety of contexts.³⁹

³⁵ On Justin's familiarity with rhetorical conventions, see Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 54–55; and Young, "Greek Apologists," 82–85.

³⁶ On the connections between claims about piety and "family values" in Roman, ancient Jewish and early Christian discourses, see further Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Εὐσέβεια: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals," *BibInt* 11 (2003): 139–65; as well as her essay in this volume.

³⁷ See Theon, *Progymnasmata*, 9–10. For the Greek text of this unit, see Leonhard von Spengel, ed., *Rhetores Graeci* (3 vols.; Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana; Leipzig: Teubner, 1853–1856), 2:109–15; for the English translation, with corrections to Spengel's edition, see George A. Kennedy, ed. and trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (SBLWGRW 10; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 50–55. Cf. the discussion in Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (trans. G. Lamb; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 198–99; and Wilhelm Süß, *Ethos: Studien zur älteren griechischen Rhetorik* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1910), 247–54.

³⁸ See the work *On Epideictic* attributed to Menander of Laodicea, especially Treatise I 363.27–364.16 and Treatise II 375.6–376.15; 380.1–9; 384.14–25. For the text, with English translation, see Donald A. Russell and Nigel G. Wilson, eds. and trans., *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 66–71, 88–91, 98–99, 106–7.

³⁹ See, for example, Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* (on the justice, liberality and piety of Augustus); Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* (on the virtues of the Emperor Trajan);

Justin's decision to label his work an ἔντευξις ("petition") and προσφώνησις (a technical term employed to label speeches of praise addressed to rulers; *1 Apol.* 1.1) seems to suggest that he had the usual sort of appeal in mind.⁴⁰ As expected, he begins by listing some of the virtues typically associated with good rulers; however, he ends the introduction with a threat:

Reason (λόγος) dictates that those who are truly pious and philosophers should honor and love only the truth, declining to follow the opinions of the ancients, if they are worthless. For not only does sound reason (σώφρων λόγος) dictate that one should not follow those who do or teach unjust things (τὰ ἀδίκαια), but the lover of truth (ἀλήθεια) should choose by all means, and even before his own life, even though death should remove him, to speak and do righteous things (τὰ δίκαια). So you, then, since you are called pious (εὐσεβής) and philosophers and guardians of justice and lovers of culture (παιδεία), listen in every way: it will be shown if you are such. (*1 Apol.* 2.1–2)

Justin employs a series of moral terms here—reason (λόγος, a title he identifies with Christ later in the address), piety (εὐσέβεια), justice (δικαιοσύνη), truth (ἀλήθεια) and culture (παιδεία)—all of which were to be expected from good rulers and good men. He then flags themes he will explore in the rest of the petition, asking that his rulers “not be moved by prejudice or by a wish to please superstitious people” (literally, “people who fear δαίμόνια”). The rest of the petition offers proof after proof that the rulers have been so moved. Enslaved to δαίμόνια, they are superstitious not pious; succumbing to their passions, they obey irrational impulses. In short, these rulers do not behave as pious philosopher kings but as tyrants.

Tyrants, the opposite of good rulers, were associated with a set of commonplace misbehaviors in ancient writings: they failed to control their passions, especially anger and sexual desire, and were therefore “slavish” and “feminine” in character. They were accused of everything from a preference for feminine clothes to a desire for the passive role in sexual acts.⁴¹ As such, they were described as “slaves

and the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (an inscription celebrating Augustus's achievements). For further discussion, see Jennifer Knust “Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice,” in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (ed. R. A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 2004), 155–73 (159–62). These texts are also analyzed by D'Angelo, “Εὐσέβεια.”

⁴⁰ This point is noted by Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 54.

⁴¹ As Gleason has shown, masculinity or femininity was defined not in terms of

to desire,” a claim that reinforced the degraded status of slaves even as it ignored the fact that, technically speaking, slaves were not permitted to express desire; as we have already seen, their sexuality was the property of others. Represented as devoted to sexual and sumptuary excess, tyrants wasted money on lavish dinner parties and expensive courtesans.⁴² A dangerous, corrupting presence, they ruined the “good” youths and the respectable women of the city, seducing them into treasonous plots and illicit activities. Bad rulers failed both as men and as leaders since they could master neither themselves nor their subjects.⁴³

Justin reproduced many of these stereotypical charges in the *First Apology*, suggesting that “you” (emperor, sons and Senate) failed to master “your” passions. Still, he blamed their depravity on demons, suggesting that they had been tricked into their bad behavior.⁴⁴

anatomical sex but as a “type” or “style.” In this scheme it becomes possible to malign an opponent for being womanish and effeminate because of the “style” he adopted in dress or manner (Gleason, *Making Men*, 58–60). Gleason studied physiognomic texts, however, not historiography proper. Nevertheless, this same paradigm appears in the representations of the monstrous emperors (e.g., Suetonius, *Calig.* 36.1; 52.1; 54.1–2; 55.11; *Nero* 28.1; 29.1) and in other moralizing texts (e.g., Apuleius, *Apol.* 74). These charges were so dangerous that Roman youths were trained to shun “feminine” mannerisms (Quintillian, *Inst.* 11.3.76) and adult men carefully avoided walking in a “feminine” way (Seneca, *Ep.* 52.12).

⁴² As usual, the prototypical “bad emperor” Caligula provides an excellent example (see Suetonius, *Calig.* 40–41; Cassius Dio 59.28.8–9). For general warnings regarding the corrupting influence of luxury, see Pseudo-Plutarch, *Lib. ed.* 5b–c; Musonius Rufus 4.20.

⁴³ For example, Plutarch dutifully rehearses the relative extravagance or restraint of the subjects of his parallel lives (e.g., *Luc.* 39–41; *Comp. Nic. Crass.* 1.4; *Lys.* 2). Sallust condemns Sulla for allowing his soldiers to indulge in “luxury and license foreign to the ways of our ancestors” (*Bell. Cat.* 11.5). Suetonius describes the two infamous Emperors Nero and Caligula as effeminate, irascible, indulgent and corrupt (*Calig.* 37–41; *Nero* 26–30). Finally, Cassius Dio reiterates Caligula’s fondness for prostitutes and feminine dress (59.28). For further analysis, see Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, 32–5; Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, esp. 42–60; Donna Hurley, *A Historical and Historiographical Commentary on Suetonius’ Life of Caligula* (American Classical Studies 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), vi–x, xiv–xviii, 29–32, 111–17, 119, 128–30, 137–44, 155–56, 192–93; Severin Koster, *Die Invektive in der griechischen und römischen Literatur* (Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 99; Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1980); Jacqueline Flint Long, *Claudian’s In Eutropium: Or, How, When, and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (rev. ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁴ That is, as he explains in the *Second Apology*, the wicked angels who fell victim to their lusts are to blame (2 *Apol.* 5), an idea Justin adapted from Jewish mythology (see esp. Yoshiko Reed, “Trickery of the Fallen Angels,” 146–55; as well as Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World* [Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1984], 33–59).

Deluded by false gods/demons, “you” promote impiety and prodigality among “your” subjects rather than σωφοσύνη and worship of the one true God. Worst of all, “you” execute innocent Christians: “You seem to fear lest all people become righteous, and you no longer have any to punish. This would be the concern of public executioners, not of good rulers. But, as we said before, we are convinced that these things are brought about by evil spirits, to demand sacrifices and service from people who live irrationally” (*I Apol.* 12; cf. 57). As “public executioners,” Roman rulers demanded violent sacrifice, putting aside their duty to judge according to reason and succumbing to their passions instead.⁴⁵ Demons, Justin warned, “strive to have you as their slaves and servants” by means of magic and other false, seductive tricks (*I Apol.* 14). Leading by example, demons convince their dupes to pursue illicit sexual excess; swayed by the demonic wickedness of such gods as Dionysius, Aphrodite and Cybele, Roman rulers not only tolerate sexual excess on the part of their subjects, they promote it (*I Apol.* 25; cf. 54; 56; 64). Taking the lead from their lust ridden gods, the emperor, his sons and the Senate approve of prostitution and even κίναῖδοι, collecting taxes from prostitutes and permitting boys to be raised for the explicit purpose of anal intercourse (*I Apol.* 27).⁴⁶ Justin ends his summary of Roman

⁴⁵ In the *Second Apology*, Justin asserts that bloody sacrifice was necessary in order to satisfy the lusts of the demons: “And besides later [the demons] enslave the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and punishments which they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices and incense and libations, which they needed after they were enslaved with lustful passions; and among people they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and every evil” (5). On the shame of acting out of anger rather than reason, see, e.g., Plutarch, *Cohib. ira* 457a; and Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 11.18. As William Harris remarks, “tales about imperial anger and *clementia* were used to set up a general standard to which emperors ought to aspire,” with the good emperor represented as steadily in control of his anger and the bad emperor depicted as a victim of uncontrolled rage (*Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001], 245).

⁴⁶ On the meaning of the term κίναῖδοι, see Gleason, *Making Men*, 65; John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 46–50; and Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (repr., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 17, 75. On the Latin *cinaedus*, see Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 142–59. This term seems to flag what was viewed as the most shocking deviation from “masculinity,” a preference for the passive role in sexual acts. As numerous scholars have observed, homoerotic sex between superordinate and subordinate (slaves, men of lower status, young men, boys) males was considered entirely “natural” and proper by many. By associating the prostitution of boys with the κίναῖδοι, Justin seems to suggest that homoerotic sex is unacceptable in any context, a view he shared with certain later Stoic

sexual “crimes” by alluding to the worship of Antinous, the youthful male lover of the Emperor Hadrian, as if this were such a decisive proof of imperial depravity that it scarcely needed to be mentioned (*1 Apol.* 29).⁴⁷

Justin’s comments remained somewhat veiled: he did not accuse the emperors themselves of unrestrained passion, effeminacy and sexual excess, preferring to associate them with demons who were then directly targeted. Still, his message was clear. Instead of simply being “slaves of desire,” these rulers/tyrants were “slaves of demons” who were themselves “slaves of desire.” As such, Justin’s προσφώνησις reads like a Christianized speech of blame rather than a traditional appeal. Hadrian, remembered by others for his munificence, his wonderful public building projects (including his magnificent temple of Venus and Rome) and for his pious devotion to the gods, was ridiculed by Justin for his love of Antinous, albeit by means of a snide remark about Antinous’s cult.⁴⁸ Antoninus Pius, divinized after

philosophers (e.g., Epictetus, Musonius Rufus) and with some Jewish and early Christian authors (e.g., Philo of Alexandria, Paul). For further discussion, see Kathy Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (HCS 40; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): on the welcome acceptance of bisexuality in early Stoic thought, see 75–77; on the later Stoic argument that male-female pairing is “natural,” see 87–90; on Paul’s (single) direct denunciation of homoerotic sexual intercourse and his horror at the dangers of fornication in general, see 142–46; and on Philo’s unique ideas about sexual desire, see 194–217.

⁴⁷ He accomplishes this move by pointedly remarking, “it is not out of place, we think, to mention here Antinous, who was recently alive, and whom everybody, with reverence, hastened to worship as a god, though they knew both who he was and what was his origin” (*1 Apol.* 29). Williams views Hadrian’s devotion to Antinous as evidence for the relative acceptance of male homoerotic sex between a super-ordinate man (in this case, the Emperor Hadrian) and his subordinate (in this case, Antinous, a young male slave; cf. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 60–61). Perhaps Hadrian’s public declaration of his devotion to Antinous, including his devastation at Antinous’s death, can also be understood in light of Hadrian’s effort to link himself with Greek philosophy, in this case by associating himself with “Greek love”; see Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire 100–450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 177–83. Christians often made snide remarks regarding Antinous, but Hadrian clearly believed that celebrating his relationship with Antinous would recommend him to his subjects. For further Christian critique of Hadrian and Antinous, see Athenagoras, *Leg.* 30.2; and Tatian, *Or.* 10.1–2. Interestingly, Celsus compared the alleged impropriety of Christian ritual practice to the iniquity of the “revelers of Antinous in Egypt” (Origin, *Cels.* 5.63).

⁴⁸ On Hadrian’s munificence, see Cassius Dio 69.5.2–3. Hadrian’s impressive building and restoration projects are detailed by Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). The temple of Venus and Roma was “the largest temple ever built in the city” (cf. Beard,

his death, honored with a temple in the Roman forum and known for his strict defense of traditional piety, was also chastised by Justin for approving of and taxing prostitution, though Justin blamed demons for Antoninus's mistake.⁴⁹ Even Marcus Aurelius, commemorated by Cassius Dio as the father of a Golden Age, known for his professed Stoic principles and labeled "philosopher" by Justin at the start of his address, is treated as equal to his adopted father in his demonically inspired depravity.⁵⁰ Building upon a biblical equation of *πορνεία* with idolatry, elaborating upon a popular story regarding the fall of licentious angels and recalling philosophical critiques of the immoralities attributed to certain gods, Justin blamed demons for Roman injustice. Nevertheless, he continued to hold the emperor, his sons and the Senate culpable for their unjust actions, warning that they would not escape the coming judgment of God (*1 Apol.* 68). Sexualized invective, apocalyptic threat and demonology were thus combined to produce a sharp rebuke of the imperial regime.⁵¹

The *Second Apology* continues this same theme, and does so, in part, by reference to the Augustan marriage legislation. In this supplementary petition, Justin addresses the Romans directly, calling on

North and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:256–59 [257]). Note that Justin names Aphrodite/Venus among the "demons" a few sentences earlier (*1 Apol.* 25).

⁴⁹ On the apotheosis of Antoninus and other emperors, see Simon R. F. Price, "From Noble Funerals to Divine Cult: The Consecration of Roman Emperors," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (ed. D. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56–105. A famous column depicting the apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and the Empress Faustina survives; see Lise Vogel, *The Column of Antoninus Pius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973). Justin mentions the practice of divinizing emperors, offering it as an example of the imitation of the Christian truth. He goes on to note that the Romans depict the form of a "cross" on their standards and trophies. According to Justin, they also set up images of the deceased emperors, naming them "gods"; though Christ, unlike the emperors, actually is divine (*1 Apol.* 55).

⁵⁰ Cassius Dio 71.36.4. Marcus Aurelius seems to have penned his own set of moral reflections grounded in Stoic philosophy: his *Meditations*, though unknown in antiquity, survived in a sixteenth-century manuscript and are commonly accepted as authentic. See the discussion by Peter A. Brunt, "Marcus Aurelius in His *Meditations*," *JRS* 64 (1974): 1–20. Justin singles out the Stoics for discussion, mentioning their teachings regarding the destruction of the world by fire (*1 Apol.* 20; cf. *2 Apol.* 7). In the *Second Apology*, Justin recalls the persecution of Musonius Rufus and grants that the Stoics were "honorable at least in their ethical teaching" (*2 Apol.* 8).

⁵¹ See further Pagels's following comment: "Christians share in common with pagans the conviction that invisible networks of superhuman beings energize human activity, and above all, empower the emperor and his subordinates to dominate the world. But there the agreement ends. What pagans revere as assuring divine protection, Christians abhor as demonic tyranny" ("Christian Apologists," 304).

them to join the Christians in a shared recognition of the injustice taking place in their city: "O Romans, what has recently happened in your city under Urbicus, and what is likewise being done everywhere by the governors unreasonably, have compelled me to compose these arguments for your sakes" (2 *Apol.* 1.1). He then argues that Urbicus and, by implication, Roman governors everywhere, violate their own moral and legal strictures. By way of introducing his argument, he offers an anecdote involving Urbicus (prefect of Rome), a pious Christian woman and a dissolute Roman man. There was a woman living in Rome, Justin claims, who, prior to conversion to Christianity, had engaged in every sort of licentious adulterous pleasure with the full approval of her lascivious husband. After conversion, she adopted a temperate lifestyle and tried to convince her husband to do the same. When, after several attempts, her efforts failed, she was forced to divorce him. Her licentious husband, instead of rejoicing that she ceased to perform sex acts with household slaves—an outrageous act that, according to the Augustan marriage legislation at least, should be severely punished⁵²—sought to have her disciplined by publicly accusing her of being a Christian. When she managed to escape punishment, her husband directed his ire against one of her Christian brethren, arranging to have him arrested and punished (2 *Apol.* 2). At the end of the tale, Justin sums up this monstrous injustice by presenting a spontaneous protest, allegedly offered by a Christian named Lucius: "What is the accusation? Why do you punish this man, not as an adulterer (μοιχός) nor as a πόρνος (prostitute/fornicator), nor murderer, nor thief, nor robber, nor convicted of any crime whatsoever, but as one who has only professed that he is called by the name Christian?" (2 *Apol.* 2.16). This protest could well have been designed to remind Justin's audience of the Augustan marriage legislation. Legally speaking, the husband was the

⁵² Theoretically, the husband could kill the slave and perhaps his wife as well, especially if he caught them in the act. Cf. the following juridical commentary by Macer: "A husband also is permitted to kill his wife's adulterer, but not, as the father is, whoever it may be; for it is provided by this statute that a husband is permitted to kill a man whom he catches in adultery with his wife in his own house (not also [in that] of his father-in-law) if the [paramour] is a pimp or if he was previously an actor or performed on the stage as a dancer or singer or if he has been condemned in criminal proceedings . . . or if he is a slave (*D* 48.5.25; translation from Alan Watson, ed. and trans., *The Digest of Justinian* [4 vols.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985], 4:811). On the application of the death penalty against certain kinds of adulterers, see Treggiari, *Roman Marriage*, 283–85.

true criminal. He ought to have divorced his wife for committing adultery, yet he not only tolerated her behavior, he encouraged it; as a result, he had become her pimp.⁵³ Indeed, Justin claims that the man had not only violated Roman law by acting as a procurer, but he was a πόρνος as well since he sought pleasures “contrary to the law of nature” (παρὰ τὴν τῆς φύσεως νόμος; 2 *Apol.* 2.4). Therefore, the Roman prefect had not only failed to uphold Roman law, he had also been swayed by a charge brought by a man who violated “natural law.”⁵⁴

TURNING THE TABLES

Mary Rose D’Angelo has recently argued that Augustus’s “family values campaign” and the context that it provided for later imperial “family values propaganda” formed an important backdrop for early Jewish and Christian moral teachings.⁵⁵ Justin’s *Apologies* provide a useful case in point. Writing in Rome, Justin directly addressed the emperor, the emperor’s sons, the Roman Senate and Romans in general, whether or not he expected them actually to read his petitions. As we have seen, Justin seems to have been well aware of debates related to the content of “Romanness” and he exploited these debates for his own purposes. Emperors claimed to guard and to promote “Romanness,” in part, by policing sexual behavior; Justin responded with a demonstration of their failure as men and rulers. Yet by indicting his rulers in familiar, sexualized terms, Justin did not argue that Christians were better Romans than the Romans themselves; rather, he worked to produce a unique identity for himself and his group, in conversation with “Roman family values” but in contradistinction from them as well.

⁵³ Summing up one provision of the *lex Iulia*, Ulpian phrases it thus: “The crime of *lenocinium* [pimping] is laid down by the *lex Julia* on adultery, since a penalty is appointed by the statute for the husband who acquires anything from the adultery of his wife and also for him who keeps her after she has been caught in adultery” (*D* 48.5.2; Watson, *Digest of Justinian*, 4:804).

⁵⁴ Justin’s turn to “natural law” reflects not “nature,” but conventional, culturally specific presuppositions about legitimate sexual roles. By calling the man a πόρνος (prostitute), Justin suggests that he took the passive role in sexual acts with other men, an act that was condemned by Greco-Roman authors if a man was a free citizen. Elite males were supposed to take the superordinate (penetrating) role if they were properly to enact their manliness.

⁵⁵ D’Angelo, “Εὐσέβεια,” esp. 139, 141–47. Also see her essay in this volume.

Justin, as I noted above, boasted of the chastity of the Christians, claiming that some Christians were so adept at self-restraint that they remained abstinent well into old age (*1 Apol.* 15.6–7). He also celebrated the many Christians who, after conversion, turned from licentiousness to σωφροσύνη (*1 Apol.* 14; *2 Apol.* 2). This exceptional capacity for self-restraint, he maintained, was given to the Christians by God and taught to them by Christ. Summarizing Jesus' teachings, he presented Christ as a righteous lawgiver who succeeded where others, including the imperial regime, had failed. Christ, Justin argued, promoted chastity, friendliness, endurance and liberality among his subjects, no matter how humble their origins or how corrupt their previous behavior (*1 Apol.* 15–17; cf. *2 Apol.* 2; *Dial.* 93). This Christ forbade adultery, second marriages, lust, prodigality, anger and swearing; he even promoted good, obedient citizenship. In other words, Justin presented a series of binding instructions, purportedly of divine origin, designed to constrain Christian behavior and to define "Christianity" as separate and different from other identity categories available at the time.⁵⁶ Unlike the Roman "family values propaganda," second marriages were forbidden rather than recommended for Christians. Moreover, Justin implied that extra-marital sex was prohibited for men and women alike.⁵⁷ In other words, Justin presented a set of sexual constraints that were more stringent than those promulgated by Augustus and promoted by subsequent emperors, arguing that the Christians had been specially appointed by God "to lead all people, by patience and gentleness,

⁵⁶ As he asserted in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, the Christians were a new, separate γένος (race, ethnicity), drawn from every race but spiritually descended from Judah, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, and yet distinct from the Jews who, he argued, had lost their claim to divine favor (*Dial.* 11.4–5; 60.4; 66.3; 69.3; 123.9; 135.3; 138.2; cf. *1 Apol.* 63).

For further discussion, see Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, 143–63; as well as Denise Kimber Buell, "Race and Universalism in Early Christianity," *J ECS* 10 (2002): 429–68; and idem, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," *HTR* 94 (2001): 449–76. On the implications of this argument, see Rajak, "Talking at Trypho"; and Michael Mach, "Justin Martyr's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo* and the Development of Christian Anti-Judaism," in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (ed. O. Limor and G. G. Stroumsa; TSMEMJ 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 27–47.

⁵⁷ In this context he cites a teaching of Jesus: "Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart before God" (*1 Apol.* 15.1; cf. Matt 5:28).

from shame and evil desires" (*I Apol.* 16.2).⁵⁸ After all, Christians were capable of a level of self-mastery that Romans did not even try to achieve. Justin did not want to be Roman; he wanted to be better than the Romans and, he claimed, he could help the Romans be better too.

Justin was not the only author to impugn Rome, the emperors and the Roman elite for sexual misbehavior. In his sixth satire, Juvenal lampoons Roman hypocrisy by describing the outrageous sexual exploits of the respectable women of the city: Eppia, a senator's wife, ran off with a gladiator (6.82–113); the Empress Messalina crept out at night in disguise so she could take her place in a brothel, staying all night until, with her lust still unsatisfied, she returned to her imperial pillow (6.114–32); and proper Roman matrons seduced their slaves, performed at banquets and adorned themselves with costly jewelry and cosmetics (6.345–50).⁵⁹ Both Julia the daughter of Augustus and Julia Augustus's granddaughter were offered as paradigmatic examples of Roman womanhood gone bad, despite (or because of?) their association with the Emperor Augustus. According to Seneca the Younger, Augustus had to banish his daughter because she was "shameless beyond indictment of shamelessness"; she roamed the city looking for paramours, selling her favors and engaging in adulteries organized from "that very forum and rostrum from which her father had proposed a law against adultery," a comment that makes the irony clear.⁶⁰ Roman historians offered lurid descriptions of the incestuous affairs and "feminine" preferences of tyrannical emperors, to the point that Caligula's sexual perversions remain famous even today.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Cooper has argued that a similar dynamic was operative in the apocryphal Acts (*Virgin and the Bride*, 45–67).

⁵⁹ See the discussion in Susanna H. Braund, "Juvenal—Misogynist or Misogamist?," *JRS* 82 (1992): 71–86, who reads this satire as a dissuasion from marriage (cf. Edward Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* [London: Athlone, 1980], esp. 18–36).

⁶⁰ Seneca, *Ben.* 6.32.1 (LCL). Cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 65.1–2. On Julia, see Amy Richlin, "Julia's Jokes, Galla Placidia, and the Roman Use of Women as Political Icons," in *Stereotypes of Women in Power* (ed. S. Dixon; New York: Greenwood, 1992), 65–84.

⁶¹ See, for example, the representation of Caligula in Robert Graves, *I, Claudius* (New York: Smith & Haas, 1934). Anthony A. Barrett interprets the ancient literary portraits of Caligula as clear-cut evidence of Caligula's "private pursuits" (*Caligula: The Corruption of Power* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], esp. 42–49; also

Yet there is an important difference between Justin's characterization of his rulers and the comments of Juvenal, the younger Seneca and various Roman historians: Roman authors were offering an in-group critique, making a joke of the hypocrisy of their peers, criticizing past emperors in order to influence the current one and, most of all, calling fellow Romans to become "Roman" again by reclaiming the good morals that, these authors suggested, defined Romanness in the first place. In other words, bad Roman behavior was interpreted as an aberration; a return to Roman *mos maiorum* would solve the problem.⁶² By contrast, Justin, a provincial from Syria-Palestine, suggested that Roman morals did not go far enough; Christian morals were better. Moreover, without Christ, Rome and her rulers would be doomed to demon-inspired delusions forever, or so Justin implied. Thus, although Justin's indictment of imperial corruption relied on a shared tradition of sexualized invective, his conclusion was quite different: become a Christian or face the dire consequences.

Justin suggested that "Romanness" is both fatally flawed and impossible to achieve given the influence of the demons on non-Christian outsiders; he also argued that "being Greek" was unsatisfactory. Repeatedly signaling his familiarity with philosophy and displaying an obvious facility with Greek rhetorical conventions, Justin succeeded in associating himself with Greek *paideia* and, therefore, with a system of reference he shared with the elite of the Roman Empire.⁶³ At the same time, Justin situated himself as non-Greek by depicting Greek religion as both demonic and depraved, by distancing him-

see Arthur Ferrill, *Caligula: Emperor of Rome* [London: Thames & Hudson, 1991]). For a different interpretation, noting the stereotypical nature of this portrait, see Hurley, *Historical and Historiographical Commentary*, v–ix, xiii–xviii, 28 (on Seutonius, *Calig.* 10.1), 29–32 (on 10.2–11), 73–78 (on 19.1–20), 84–157 (on 22.1–42, regarding the *monstrum*), 178–89 (on 50.1–52), and 192–97 (on 54.1–55.3).

⁶² See Courtney's following comment: "Juvenal's moral judgments are thus based not on any coherent and rationalised philosophy, but on the code of behavior which the Romans had built up for themselves" (*Commentary on the Satires*, 23). Juvenal, therefore, laments the loss of a "moral view" he shared with the Roman aristocracy as it imagined itself to be or claimed that it once was.

⁶³ He discussed Stoics (2 *Apol.* 8; 13; *Dial.* 2.1–3), Peripatetics (*Dial.* 2.1), Cynics (2 *Apol.* 3), Socrates (1 *Apol.* 5; 18; 2 *Apol.* 10; *Dial.* 1.1), Plato (1 *Apol.* 18; 59–60; 2 *Apol.* 13; *Dial.* 4.1) and Pythagoras (2 *Apol.* 18; *Dial.* 4.1) among others. On *paideia* and the performance of "Greekness," see the various essays in Simon Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Cf. especially Goldhill, "Introduction. Setting an Agenda: 'Everything Is Greece to the Wise,'" 1–25 (13).

self from philosophers (as their truths were flawed or incomplete)⁶⁴ and by excluding Christians who, Justin argued, were “too Greek.”⁶⁵ In other words, Justin’s anti-imperial rhetoric participated in a larger effort to define and to produce Christian difference.

CONCLUSIONS

To Justin, illicit sex and the worship of demons, that is, devotion to any god other than his own, served to demarcate outsiders from (allegedly) pure insiders. Roman, Greek or Jew, they were all associated with demons and *πορνεία*.⁶⁶ In the contentious, competitive, diverse city of Rome, such an argument may have been read as both a sharp rebuke of imperial hypocrisy and as an attempt to wrest prestige and position away from more privileged groups.⁶⁷ Still, Justin could not escape the city or its rulers; the dynamics of empire informed every aspect of his argument, from the decision to address the emperor to his use of transparent allusions to Roman law and practice. As such, Justin may be fruitfully compared to his fellow provincial, the Syrian Greek Lucian of Samosata. Justin’s more rhetorically adept contemporary Lucian also expressed a disdain for Roman hypocrisy. Like Justin, Lucian was well aware of the persuasive possibilities inherent in presenting oneself as fluent in Greek literary culture; he built a career lampooning the hypocrisy produced by Rome’s fascination with all things Greek.⁶⁸ According to Tim Whitmarsh’s

⁶⁴ Cf. 2 *Apol.* 10.2–3: “For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated according to their share of Logos by invention and contemplation. But since they did not know all that concerns Logos, who is Christ, they often contradicted themselves.”

⁶⁵ Cf. *Dial.* 35; 80. Justin claims that they, like the philosophers, founded “heresies” that were necessarily an adulteration of an original truth and that they, like all Gentiles, were animated by demons. For further discussion, see Le Boulluec, *La notion d’hérésie*, 40–91.

⁶⁶ Justin employs familiar biblical tropes involving the sexual and religious misadventures of Israel in the wilderness in order to argue that the Jews had always been enslaved to desire and that they were hard of heart and prone to idolatry (*Dial.* 19; 92; 131–34). Since Justin no longer construed himself or his group as “Jewish” per se, the misadventures of Israel applied neither to him nor to other Christians but to sinful Israel alone.

⁶⁷ See Catharine Edwards and Greg Woolf, eds., *Rome the Cosmopolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); especially Edwards and Woolf, “Cosmopolis: Rome as World City,” 1–20; and Catharine Edwards, “Incorporating the Alien: The Art of Conquest,” 44–70.

⁶⁸ The opinions Lucian expresses regarding Rome are complex and contradictory.

sophisticated reading, Lucian satirized the “conversion of (particularly philosophical) *paideia* into a commercial spectacle” by the Roman appropriation of “Greek learning”; nevertheless, Lucian’s own writing can be interpreted as “a symptom of, rather than an antidote to, the general insincerity, deviousness, moral bankruptcy, and trickery of Roman Greek *paideia*.”⁶⁹ Lucian’s satires could not and would not have been possible without Rome’s commercialization of Greek literature.⁷⁰ Justin faced a similar dilemma. Displaying his own erudition, in part by references to Greek *paideia*, Justin proclaimed *paideia* as entirely insufficient, even demonic. He, like Lucian, was also trapped by the exigencies of empire: his arguments were fundamentally implicated in imperial power relationships even as he tried to distance himself from them.⁷¹

Justin, a Samaritan, was a former resident of a Roman imperial colony living in the capital city. He was a recipient of a Roman Greek education and intimately familiar with Roman law and imperial propaganda. Still, he had little patience for what he perceived to be Roman impiety and immorality. Indeed, calling attention to the unjust suffering of Christians—offering a formal demonstration that this suffering was, in fact, unjust—Justin went so far as to re-

Moreover, they are presented by means of various “ironic personae” and cannot be read as clear cut evidence of authorial intention or sentiment (see Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 248–53; cf. Erik Gunderson’s essay in this volume). As Whitmarsh observes, “The search for Lucian’s ‘views of Rome’, then, is doubly limited. First, the reconstruction of an internally coherent set of opinions is hermeneutically naïve: it necessitates problematical judgments concerning the relative sincerity and insincerity of different utterances. Secondly, it assumes a unified subjective consciousness inspiring the texts; whereas Lucian’s deracinated writing specifically manipulates the identities of his narrating personae” (253). Still, his amusing depictions of the depravity of Rome in such works as *Nigrinus* offer a masterful skewering of the pretensions found in Roman imperial propaganda.

⁶⁹ Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 293, 257.

⁷⁰ According to Whitmarsh, Lucian was well aware of this dilemma: “Lucian also ironizes any attempt to assume a high-mindedly Hellenic position of exteriority to this system” (*ibid.*, 294).

⁷¹ My reading of Justin and Lucian here has been informed by studies of European colonialism, especially the ground-breaking work of Bhabha and Spivak, that take note of asymmetrical patterns of reciprocity that transformed both colonist and colonized. See, for example, Homi K. Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817,” *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 144–65; and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

commend that the people of Rome “publish this petition” so that everyone could plainly discern just how guilty their rulers actually were (2 *Apol.* 14). Justin would insist that he was “a Christian.” Yet being a Christian meant he could not be a Roman, a Jew, a Greek or a heretic. He thus needed his enemies to identify precisely what he was not. He also needed and depended upon a highly gendered, hierarchical portrait of Roman depravity and Christian moral purity that continued to link “slavishness” (and therefore slaves) with desire, “manliness” (and therefore men) with mastery, and “femininity” (and therefore women) with weakness, although a few exceptional women may, with the intervention of Christ, partake in a form of manly self-control that even the Roman prefect had failed to achieve.

THE SEDUCTION OF WEAK MEN:
TERTULLIAN'S RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF
GENDER AND ANCIENT CHRISTIAN "HERESY"

Brad Windon

Although the markers that describe the Christian community are numerous and include many ethical and visual descriptions, the early Christian writers paid vigilant attention to the assent to knowledge.¹ In this essay I argue that, when Tertullian (c. 160–220 C.E.) separates the “self” from “others” in order to establish Christian identity, he thereby articulates and sanctions forms of thinking and believing. In other words, what one thinks or believes, including how one arrives at a position, are important markers of what it means to be Christian. Tertullian and other second-century C.E. North African intellectuals display a clear debt to the philosophic discourse of the later Roman Republic. A trajectory traced from Cicero’s *De natura deorum* through Minucius Felix’s *Octavius* to Tertullian illustrates the Christian preoccupation with assent to true knowledge. In the prologue to *De natura deorum* Cicero argues that it is more prudent for the academy to withhold assent to things uncertain (. . . *a rebus incertis adensationem cohibuisse* . . .; *Nat. d.* 1.2) then to rectify *inscientia* with the acquisition of false or dubious knowledge. Consequently, Tertullian’s contemporary Minucius Felix, in referencing this passage, asserts that the question of the gods demands a choice. The *Octavius* narrates a *disputatio* between a Christian (Octavius) and a Stoic non-Christian character (Caecilius). Interestingly, the charge against Caecilius, the non-Christian persona, is that he lacks knowledge and that he suspends judgment on some other aspects of knowledge, which is a position

¹ This attention to reflective process, or weighing what is true, is not unexpected, since Christian rhetoric tended to deploy discourses of *religio* in terms of orthodoxy rather than the more traditional deployment of *religio* as orthopraxis. The distinction is clearly depicted by A. H. Armstrong, “The Way and the Ways: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in the Fourth Century A.D.,” *VC* 38 (1984): 1–17; and J. A. North, “The Development of Religious Pluralism,” in *The Jews among Christians and Pagans in the Roman Empire* (ed. J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak; London: Routledge, 1992), 174–93.

considered virtuous in *De natura deorum*. Octavius employs the metaphor of a forked road that illustrates the basis of his response to Caecilius. He describes Caecilius as a man at an intersection where one road branches into several others. Not only does he not know the right road, he refuses to take any altogether (*Oct.* 16). The *Octavius* provides a pertinent example of the way a person's disposition to knowledge becomes a marker of Christian identity. In other words, Christian rhetoric maps a requirement of choice or assent in the place of the virtuous suspension of judgment in traditional philosophical rhetoric. This kind of narrative provides the background to my reference to legitimate forms of thought and belief.²

Also interesting in this regard is the reversal of the Roman binary of *religio* and *superstitio*. Traditional Roman *religio* demanded local compliance with cultic activities but shunned too much enquiry into the *raison d'être* for those activities.³ For the religious person, scrupulousness (doing and passing over) is essential (especially according to civic customs), while giving too much consideration to the reason and rationale of particular beliefs amounts to superstition. Christianity by contrast requires commitment and consideration of its *raison d'être* and, in order to exact this consideration, it inverts the meaning of *superstitio* so that it now refers to activity that is not given enough considered reason. As an example of this Christian discursive emphasis, in this essay I argue that Tertullian and other early Christian writers deploy the symbol of the heretical woman as an example of unscrupulous and unsanctioned thought and belief.

In what follows, I discuss more specifically the intersection of discourses of legitimate thinking and believing with gender in Tertullian, arguing that Tertullian focuses his own conception of legitimate thinking and thinker-types through the representation of other thinkers, so that they function as negative discursive actors for the development

² On the novelty of philosophy embracing theology in the late Roman Republic, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Theological Efforts of the Roman Upper Classes in the First Century B.C.," *CP* 79 (1984): 199–211.

³ Verrius Flaccus's definition of the religious person succinctly illustrates these requirements: *religiosi dicuntur qui faciendarum praetermittendarumque rerum divinarum secundum morem civitatis dilectum habent nec se superstitionibus implicant* (Epitome; cited in Edwin A. Judge, "Did the Churches Compete with Cult Groups," in *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* [ed. J. T. Fitzgerald, T. H. Olbricht and L. M. White; NovTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2003], 501–24 [503]).

of his own thinking and self-identity. The discursive object “heretic” is an especially significant type of the Other who encapsulates the essence of what it means to think in an illegitimate manner. The content thereof is further filled out by reading Tertullian’s view of “woman” as a heretic. I will show that a female is considered more susceptible to heresy than “man” and is thus also more effective in the spread of heresy. Furthermore, I suggest that Tertullian sustains this discursive object, constructing it rhetorically into the trope of the “seductive woman,” as a way of creating an opposition between the weak man who chooses her heresy over against the strong man who resists her. Building on the work of feminist scholarship exemplified by Virginia Burrus, I evaluate the symbolic role of the prophetess Philumene, who Tertullian portrays as one who permits thoughts and beliefs to penetrate her mind without being scrupulous just as she allows her body to be penetrated by men.⁴

My argument further owes a debt in its theorizing to the contributions of what one may summarily identify as “poststructuralist theory,”⁵ which provides ways of interpreting the complex agencies that

⁴ Virginia Burrus describes the fourth-century symbol of the heretical woman as a “threatening image of a community with uncontrollable boundaries” (“The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius, and Jerome,” *HTR* 84 [1991]: 229–48 [232]).

⁵ I am indebted throughout to the thought provoking work of Judith Butler. Butler’s theory of subject formation considers that subjects are in a constant state of creation and destruction by historically constituted discourses. Her notion of performativity directs readers to interrogate the (felicitous) conditions that lead to an emerging subjectivity while at the same time recognizing its fragility. Reading J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), Butler proposes that the performative enacts the very thing it describes. In this way language both produces its subjectivities, but it is also an effect of power. For a digest of these ideas, see Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 223–42; idem, “For a Careful Reading,” in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (ed. S. Benhabib et al.; New York: Routledge, 1995), 127–43; and idem, “Performativity’s Social Magic,” in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader* (ed. R. Shusterman; Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 113–28. In a general way, poststructuralist theory analyzes the “possibilities of sense making available within the discourses within a particular sense-making community” (Bronwyn Davies, “Introduction: Poststructuralist Lines of Flight in Australia,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 17 [2004]: 3–10 [4]). I use the term “discourse” to refer either to a system of significations, both verbal and non-verbal, that mark out a particular context, or to what might be called a syntax that subsequently sanctions a set of subjectivities while at the same time excluding others. On the term discourse, see R. Keith Sawyer, “A Discourse on Discourse: An Archaeological History of an Intellectual Concept,” *Cultural Studies* 16 (2002): 433–56. Daniel Boyarin’s example of the discourse of martyrdom is also illustrative for my purposes here (see “Martyrdom and the Making

constitute identities or individual subjects. It also disturbs the assumed ontologies that appear when natural subjects conceal their own production by historical discourses. In this instance here, it is common place in Christian historiography to use the terms "Christian" and "heretic" as if they have an ontologically stable meaning. In actuality, however, these identities are figured and refigured by the recitation of the terms in a variety of discourses. These kinds of discourses tend to constitute the heretic as a deviant Christian. Yet the instability of such a description is emphasized by the contest for the term "Christian" and the resistance of the label "heretic" that appears in early Christian texts. Thus, by labelling the discursive object "heretic," Tertullian forges his own "orthodoxy," so that both terms serve the construction of his self-identity.

Further, articulating an identity necessitates and creates belonging, consisting of both being and longing, that is, an indication of existence in a position, either imagined or concrete (local), and an affective dimension, implying a desire/non-desire to be in that place.⁶ At the same time, however, identity creates abjection or outsiders, as belonging is not an indifferent activity but an intimately interested one. Indeed, the creation of a discursive other is a necessary strategy to shore up one's own identity. Managing belonging requires the demarcation and articulation of both a social world (space) and the interpellation of a subjectivity for that space. In other words, it requires

of Christianity and Judaism," *JECs* 6 (1998): 577–627 [579 n. 6]). On the possibilities of sense-making related to the "conditions of myth as produced and conveyed by the discourses that characterize and contextualize our daily lives," see the lucid poststructuralist essay by Sharn Rocco, "Doing Derrida down under—A Matter of (Feminist) Response-Ability," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 17 (2004): 135–49.

⁶ Vikki Bell, "Performativity and Belonging: An Introduction," *Theory, Culture and Society* 16 (1999): 1–10 (1). Identities are always imagined since they require language for their existence and use language to forge relationships that do not exist prior to being spoken about. The idea of "imagined communities" was made influential by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (rev. ed.; London: Verso, 1991), who argues that both the nation state and its subsets are imagined communities constructed by the politics and language of their members. Anderson asserts that all nations are imagined since "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion" (19). Accordingly, even local communities are distinguished by the style in which they are imagined. Any understanding of identity or belonging is therefore inextricably linked to the language that imagines the group.

a shape that welcomes a fit. "You do not belong," implies both the existence of something to belong to (space) and a subject that does not fit. Hence, belonging is in many ways determined by the discourses that constitute the dynamic or syntax of the daily life of the community. The fixedness of particular representations needs to be thought of as an effect of power, calling into existence legitimate subjectivities and bringing about a normativity with respect to the imagined subject all the while concealing its own inherent construction. It thus becomes part of the cultural intelligibility.⁷ Moreover, juxtaposed to this notion of productive power is the violence met out on an infinite number of abjected subjectivities by the dominant discourse, which displaces and marginalizes them. Tertullian thus uses the opposition of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in order to style and fix a self-identity with a clear boundary and legitimacy. The associated deployment of the woman Philumene serves to demarcate that which is beyond the normative boundary inscribed by Tertullian. She is abjected and marginalized as a symbol of unbounded forms of thinking stemming from illegitimate sources.

In order to elucidate this larger argument, I have structured this essay in three sections. In the first part I outline the meaning of heretic and heresy as it applies to the construction of legitimate Christian identity as framed by Tertullian. In the second section I position the prophetess Philumene and her associate Apelles within the framework of this meaning. Finally, in the third part, I draw out the argument that the meaning of heresy figures as a paradigm of introduction/reception, of volition and resistance, that maps the discursive object "woman" in a comparable way to the object "heresy."

⁷ The productive effect of power through discourse received special attention in the early work of Michel Foucault, (e.g., *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, London: Pantheon, 1972]). Burrus ("Heretical Woman") elaborates on the idea of the "zero point" from Michel Foucault (*Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* [trans. R. Howard; New York: Vintage, 1973]), as an example of the productive effect of discourse. Burrus compares the invention of madness described by Foucault with the invention of heresy (according to its Christian use) by its separation from and opposition to orthodoxy. Cf. Averil Cameron, "Redrawing the Map: Early Christian Territory after Foucault," *JRS* 76 (1986): 266–71, which is a review of Foucault's last two volumes of *History of Sexuality*.

THE MEANING OF HERESY

Approaches to the study of heresy fundamentally shifted following the publication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*,⁸ in which he cautioned against the tendency of equating *orthodoxy* with categories of "majority" and "true origin" while simultaneously associating *heresy* with concepts such as "minority status" and "deviation" and "derivation" (from correct belief).⁹ Bauer sought to reconstruct early Christian history without presupposing the conceptual categories imposed by later theological judgments. His chief example of this kind of later re-assessment was the church historian Eusebius, who uses the binary opposition orthodoxy/heresy to legitimize one reading of Christian origins and the subsequent trajectory of its development.¹⁰ Indeed, to assess any community as orthodox is an act that represents the interested judgment of one party. The very attempt to characterize the other as heretical reveals an effort

⁸ Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im Ältesten Christentum* (2d ed.; BHT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964). I will refer to the most recent English translation: Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. R. A. Kraft and G. Krodel; repr., Mifflintown: Singer, 1996).

⁹ Bauer challenged the traditional trajectory of "orthodox" Christian historiography that argued that the pure doctrine of Jesus was passed on to the apostles and then to their successors. In this view, some Christians abandoned this doctrine under the influence of the devil: "This development takes place in the following sequence: unbelief, right belief, wrong belief" (Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, xxiii). Bauer asserted that this sequence was a construct of "orthodox" historiography and that in some instances what counted for "orthodoxy" was in fact a divergent form of an earlier Christianity that was itself later considered to be "heretical." Various adjustments have been made to Bauer's theory; see especially Michel Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond: On Recent Scholarly Discussions of *Hairesis* in the Early Christian Era," *SecCent* 8 (1991): 65–82; and Daniel J. Harrington, "The Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* during the Last Decade," *HTR* 73 (1980): 289–98. Nevertheless, his work has left a lasting impression, especially his consideration of the contingent nature of the articulation of identity, wherein the notion of heresy is not self-evident or independent of orthodoxy, but rather an effect of power.

¹⁰ Scholarly works on ancient conceptions and uses of heresy are numerous. See most recently Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II^e–III^e siècles* (2 vols.; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985). Also instructive is Ron Cameron's essay on the way Eusebius's history is controlled by the mythological structure of the Acts of the Apostles ("Alternate Beginnings—Different Ends: Eusebius, Thomas, and the Construction of Christian Origins," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi* [ed. L. Bormann, K. Del Tredici and A. Standhartinger; NovTSup 74; Leiden: Brill, 1994], 501–25). Cf. Norbert Brox, "Häresie," *RAC*: 249–97; and James F. McCue, "Orthodoxy and Heresy: Walter Bauer and the Valentinians," *VC* 33 (1979): 118–30.

to counter a threat to that party's imagined orthodoxy. Rarely is the label heretic assumed willingly. From the standpoint of the anachronistic judgments of later literature, those communities assessed by future generations as heretical never considered themselves so and may well have been indistinguishable from their contemporaries in terms of the designation "Christian." From our vantage point, there merely existed "Christianities" in the ancient context.¹¹ Moreover, heresy can only be understood in terms of orthodoxy. Hence, a definition of heresy cannot be a natural, ahistorical or a stable ontological category; rather, it must be predicated on its structural relation to orthodoxy.¹² For heresy to exist there must be an authoritative political/institutional apparatus capable of identifying and managing heretics.¹³ Someone "Other" only exists because of a subject both capable of perceiving their differences and recognizing them as meaningful; indeed, this requires "a subject endowed with the aptitude and the inclination to *establish* the differences which are held to be significant in the social world under construction."¹⁴ Tertullian demonstrates precisely this kind of aptitude and inclination, as he constitutes himself textually as an authoritative pastor and protector of orthodoxy, as one identifying and managing heretics.

In any assessment of identity construction the concept of the *proximate other* is most instructive.¹⁵ The proximate other is far more interesting than any "distant other," especially because of the threat to identity that the former poses and because of the role played by this proximate other in shaping the identity of the group in question. Separation is taken for granted with respect to distant others; the proximate other, however, has a parasitic relationship with respect to its articulator, which is why Tertullian's most common designation for this phenomenon is "heretic." As proximate other, the heretic is

¹¹ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, xxi.

¹² Jacques Berlinerblau, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy and *Doxa*," *HR* 40 (2001): 327–51 (331). The standards of any audience are the determinants of deviance.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 335.

¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Power," in *Cultural Sociology* (ed. L. Spillman; Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 69–76 (71).

¹⁵ This concept of proximity is most helpfully discussed by Jonathan Z. Smith, "What a Difference a Difference Makes," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity* (ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs; Studies in the Humanities 9; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 3–48.

a deviant insider, one who possesses both nearness and remoteness, one who is *in* the institution but attempts to (re)order its discourse to some other end. While they are similar in identity, enough difference exists to make problematic their complete membership in the group and to ensure their role as a threat to the manager(s) of orthodoxy.¹⁶ The nearness/remoteness and insider/outsider binaries beg two questions that are instructive for an examination of the production of community identity in Tertullian. First, what is this sameness that predicates the heretic with an existing insider status, at least linguistically, and, second, what is the difference that makes this insider status problematic? Moreover, a supplementary question emerges: Why are these features significant in the social world under construction? I will argue that the essential problem with the heretic, that which constitutes his or her otherness, is the unsanctioned and unbounded forms of thought and belief that stem from illegitimate sources.

Helpful in illuminating this element is Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum* (*Prescription against Heretics*), a relatively early and general work, which provides an admonition based on specific circumstances in Tertullian's own time period (*Praescr.* 1)—the existence of heresies. The admonition in question is that the reality of heresies ought not to cause surprise (*mirari*), because, as Tertullian asserts, their existence was foretold. Moreover, heresy exists in order to subject faith to temptation in order to prove or test the validity of that faith. He further illustrates this point by the metaphor of a fever, which arises for a destructive purpose and therefore ought to be dreaded and avoided, and not considered an object of wonder or intrigue despite its potential power.

In all of this, Tertullian seeks to defend the perception that, although heresy prevails and has on occasion subverted the faith of

¹⁶ Berlinerblau, "Toward a Sociology of Heresy," 335. The early Christian church inevitably sought to separate itself first from Judaism because of a sameness predicated on heritage. Although Judaism remains problematic in Tertullian's text because of its proximity, it features as less problematic when compared to the heretic. While Tertullian's distant others are various and shifting, they are generally the imagined group called the *vulgi* that make up the members of Greco-Roman religions. See, for example, Tertullian, *Res.* 1 (CCSL 2:921): *Fiducia Christianorum resurrectionis mortuorum. Illam credentes sumus; hoc credere veritas cogit . . . Sed vulgus inridet, existimans nihil superesse post mortem.* The opposition is between the *Christiani* and the *vulgi*, and Tertullian signifies the insider with the first person plural marking out the "us" and "them." Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of original texts are from Tertullian, *Opera* (CCSL 1–2), and English translations are from *ANF*.

some in his community (including notable examples in the general Christian community), this heresy ought *not* to be more highly regarded or alluring than the “true” faith that he is describing and promoting.¹⁷ To this end he introduces a second metaphor related to a victor in a fight (*Praescr.* 1). Since the victor’s power is proportionate to the weakness of his opponent, Tertullian argues that victory does not evidence power but merely the impotence of the opponent. It follows that heresy does not have intrinsic power because it overturns one’s faith, rather, those whose faith is subverted are weak opponents and the true nature of heresy—its infirmity—is evidenced by a strong faith that will not be defeated. So here heresy is hypostasized; it has power and it competes in a battle with faith. Tertullian in fact defines heresy in relation to its attempt to overpower faith, so that faith in this context is defined as the power or potential to recognize what is “true.”¹⁸ Heresy, however, challenges the possessor of faith to adopt an alternative belief. Tertullian is here clearly concerned for the community that he identifies as faithful. He attempts to shore up the boundaries circumscribed by the knowledge that defines his community, guarding it against people promoting forms of knowledge outside of this boundary or rule of faith.¹⁹ This concern displays his conservative and protective role as a manager of orthodoxy. His paradigm for configuring Christianity in this way necessarily creates the discursive objects—“the weak” and “the wonderers”—who appear as “others” in his text.²⁰ Thus, the victor is determined before the

¹⁷ The heretic Hermogenes is offered as an example of one who was lured away from the rule of faith, attracting a following in the process. As Tertullian notes in his *Treatise against Hermogenes*, “He is a thorough adulterer, both doctrinally and carnally, since he is rank indeed with the contagion of your marriage-hacks, and has also failed in cleaving to the rule of faith as much as the apostle’s own Hermogenes [cf. 2 Tim 1:15]” (*Hermog.* 1; *ANF* 3:477). Also see the putative examples of others “going over to the other side” in Tertullian, *Praescr.* 3.1–2.

¹⁸ On faith as assent or recognition, see Eric Francis Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 37–39, 77–83. On faith in Tertullian more generally, see Anthony J. Guerra, “Polemical Christianity: Tertullian’s Search for Certitude,” *SecCent* 8 (1991): 109–23.

¹⁹ The theological works of Tertullian deal with a variety of issues. On view generally are the issues of incarnation and resurrection as they intersect with popular Stoic philosophy of the time and as manifested in various “Gnostic” sects. For further discussion of the social dimension of Tertullian’s theology, see Judith Perkins’s essay in this volume.

²⁰ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 2.18–19 (CCSL 1:188): *qui in fide non valent*; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 3.1 (CCSL 1:188): *isti miriones*. The idea of wonder or curiosity as a negative quality is expanded more generally in Tertullian, specifically in *Praescr.* 9. Tertullian thus thoroughly operates with the traditional framework that Bauer criticizes by asserting that curiosity or wonder lure believers away from the “pure doctrine.”

contest as the one who will remain within the boundary inscribed by Tertullian's description of what is true.

The contest narrated by Tertullian is thus framed by *his* concept of truth. Truth is the ground for faith, while any alternative is the basis of heresy. Within this framework Tertullian most often uses *fides* to describe the knowledge content that marks membership in the Christian community. For example, his principles of *regula fidei* or *disciplina fidei* mark out the content of legitimate knowledge.²¹ In these cases *veritas* and *fides* represent corollaries of the same idea. *Fides*, however, can also be viewed as a disposition toward truth, as it is in the second chapter of *Prescription against Heretics*. The strong *fides* prevails by assenting to truth. It is the weak who are unable to recognize what is true, in that they are susceptible to the competing bodies of knowledge and beliefs of the heretic. The paradigm of strong/weak faith is here directly related to the cognitive process of weighing what is true or, more explicitly, choosing what one believes. Tertullian therefore locates a sense of accountability with the recipient of heresy, although, as I hope to show, this character's responsibility or agency is represented in a variety of ways. Tertullian's heresy etymology is instructive in this respect:

... "[H]eresies" are from the Greek language meaning choice, the choice which a person employs when introducing or embracing heresies . . . However, for us, we are permitted neither to *introduce* (*inducere*) anything *from our own authority* (*ex nostro arbitrio*) nor to *choose* (*eligere*) that which any person has *introduced from his own authority* (*arbitrio suo induxerit*). Our authorities are the apostles of the Lord, who themselves choose nothing from their own authority that they were introducing, but faithfully distributed to the nations the doctrine they received from Christ. Therefore, if even an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, she would be cursed by us. Even then the holy spirit had foreseen that there would be in a certain virgin [named] Philumene an angel of deceit, transforming herself into an angel of light, by whose signs and illusions Apelles was *lead* (*inductus*) when he *introduced* (*induxit*) a new heresy.²²

²¹ See L. William Countryman, "Tertullian and the Regula Fidei," *SecCent* 2 (1982): 208–27.

²² Tertullian, *Praescr.* 6.11–20 (CCSL 1:191; my translation and emphasis): . . . *haereses dictae graeca uoce ex interpretatione electionis qua quis maxime siue ad instituendas siue ad suscipiendas eas utitur . . . Nobis uero nihil ex nostro arbitrio inducere licet sed nec eligere quod aliquis de arbitrio suo induxerit. Apostolos Domini habemus auctores qui nec ipsi quicquam ex suo arbitrio quod inducerent, elegerunt, sed acceptam a Christo disciplinam fideliter nationibus adsignauerunt. Itaque etiamsi angelus de caelis aliter euangelizaret, anathema diceretur a nobis.*

Tertullian's description of the heretic as one who introduces new knowledge reinscribes his view that genuine Christian belief requires assent to knowledge handed down by an unbroken succession of those who passed on the "pure" teachings of Jesus. His determination to promote one certain truth requires an explanation for other bodies of knowledge and beliefs held by persons who claim to be part of this legitimate tradition.²³ Furthermore, the self-evident nature of Tertullian's truth captured by his rule of faith terminology requires that those who give assent to contrary knowledge must either have been deceived by a source of illegitimate knowledge or themselves be deceivers who use the allure of heresy for personal gain.²⁴ Tertullian's Christian thinker receives that which is apostolic and the apostles, in turn, received it from Christ. Tertullian therefore cautions against two dangers: against introducing (*inducere*) unauthorized knowledge and against choosing or accepting (*eligere*) unauthorized knowledge. Interestingly, Tertullian emphasizes that the heretic, as either the one who introduces heresy or the one who adopts what is introduced, is self-condemned. He achieves this condemnation by forging an etymological link between the Greek word ἄρρεσις (essentially meaning "choice") and the concept of a bad choice, in this passage designated by the terms *electio* and *eligio*.

This idea of "heresy" as a bad choice, and the concomitant idea of a sect that identifies with a particular bad choice, is a second-century Christian development of the meaning of the word ἄρρεσις. The term occurs frequently in the writings of the first two centuries C.E., appearing in Jewish and Greek literature in a mostly neutral or positive way and only taking on the derogatory emphasis in Christian usage. In Greek literature the term amounts to the intellectual competence to choose a certain way of thinking or to join the membership of a sect. Only with the assumption of a unique and certain system of truth revealed in Christ does the idea of heresy as a wrong choice arise.²⁵

Proiderat iam tunc Spiritus sanctus futurum in uirgine quadam Philumene angelum seductionis transfigurantem se in angelum lucis, cuius signis et praestigiis Apelles inductus nouam haeresin induxit.

²³ This is an important aspect of Tertullian's thinking. His notion of the unique and self-evident apostolic truth is fundamental. See, for example, Tertullian, *Praescr.* 9 (*ANF* 3:248): "... there is some one, and therefore definite thing taught by Christ."

²⁴ See, for example, Tertullian, *Apol.* 46.32 and *An.* 2.8, where personal glory is understood to be the motivation.

²⁵ Bauer's thesis has been the root of some important studies on the meaning of

Faith is a disposition towards a truth, described and constructed by Tertullian as a product of Christian history. For Tertullian this truth is static and the faithful are aligned with it on the basis of their assent. His rule of faith then acts as a boundary of true knowledge.²⁶ To move outside of this boundary is to have one's faith subverted. Since Tertullian understands heresy as a form of competing knowledge, the heretic becomes viewed as the one who imparts this competing knowledge. For those who are inside or aligned with the *regula* or *disciplina*, curiosity/seeking or wonder at other knowledge evidences a lack of faith, for faith rests on static and defined knowledge. For Tertullian any curiosity beyond the questions that lead to the rule of faith is excessive, revealing a character that is curious, weak and prone to wonder.²⁷

The proximate other represented as *heretic* both introduces and chooses knowledge that exceeds and transgresses the boundary inscribed by Tertullian's rule of faith. By necessity Tertullian labels this knowl-

the term αἵρεσις. Le Boulluec (*La notion d'hérésie*) identifies Justin Martyr as the originator of the Christian use of the term. For excellent discussions of the term and its background, see further Desjardins, "Bauer and Beyond," 73–82; and Harrington, "Reception of Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy*," 293–95. On the neutral or positive connotation of the term, see Marcel Simon, "From Greek *Haeresis* to Christian Heresy," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant* (ed. W. R. Schoedel and R. L. Wilken; ThH 53; Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 101–16. Simon writes: "It simply meant, according to its etymology, 'choice,' and especially the choice of embracing a particular school of thought. There could be in the Greek, as well as in the Jewish view, depending on the view of the speaker, good and bad heresies. But in principle they are neither good or bad, since there existed no universally recognized criterion by which to classify them in two opposing categories and to distinguish truth from error" (104). With the rise of Christianity came the attempt to circumscribe a criterion of authority. Cf. Tertullian's rule of faith in this respect (n. 26 below). Also see Simon's citation of Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies* 8.3.1.

²⁶ The rule of faith marks the constitutive inside of true knowledge. It is a boundary inscribed so that people do not move beyond and outside of the rule of faith. In his *Prescription against Heretics*, Tertullian makes some concessions for those who wish to explore knowledge on account of curiosity once the rule of faith is in place. (e.g., Tertullian, *Praescr.* 14). However, the treatise also exhorts those who have faith not to engage in *disputatio* with the excessive thinking of the heretics. This kind of engagement (*congressus*) will fatigue the strong (*firmi*) and catch the weak (*infirmi*) by luring them away to other beliefs and causing those in the middle (*medii*) to doubt (cf. *Praescr.* 15:4–6).

²⁷ Where philosophy in general held that both the suspension of judgment and ongoing curiosity about dubious issues is virtuous, Tertullian, like the example of Minucius Felix, requires faith as assent to a body of knowledge and portrays further enquiry or curiosity as excessive. See, for example, Tertullian, *Hermog.* 19.1; 27.11.

edge as issuing from an illegitimate source and containing novel elements that pollute the “pure” teachings of Christ. In order to explore this element further, in the next section I examine the ancient sources related to the second-century prophetess Philumene. It can be shown from these sources that the conception of the heretic is figured more precisely by its associations with existing representations of gender. Ultimately, this observation reveals the corollary between the perceived proclivity for women to adopt heresy and the stereotype of the ideal masculine subject who has cognitive self-mastery. The resultant binary posits a feminine subject lacking cognitive control, who allows her unbounded mind to be penetrated by all kinds of knowledge.

REPRESENTATIONS OF PHILUMENE’S AGENCY AND INFLUENCE

It is common place for the managers of orthodoxy to associate male heretics with a female counterpart. Jerome, for instance, considers that feminine support is a feature of heretical success.²⁸ Moreover, it is a customary strategy of early Christian historiography to denigrate the evolution of a sect because of the involvement of women.²⁹ This strategy is usually achieved by the deployment of the stereotype of a woman as an illegitimate Christian leader. As a part of, as well

²⁸ Jerome, *Epist.* 133.4, lists examples of male and female pairs of heretics (cited in Anne Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women* [trans. O. C. Dean, Jr.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 189).

²⁹ There are, indeed, exceptions to this strategy; nevertheless, the dominant historiography of “orthodox” historians tends to represent women as leaders who corrupt men and orthodoxy. Clearly this is the perspective of a predominantly male discourse, but it is still instructive of a perceived threat and reveals the initiative to combat it. On the general methodological issue of reconstructing women’s lives from male accounts of women, see Bernadette Brooten, “Early Christian Women and Their Cultural Context,” in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* (ed. A. Yarbro Collins; Biblical Scholarship in North America 10; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 65–91; Elizabeth A. Clark, “Women, Gender, and the Study of Christian History,” *CH* 70 (2001): 395–426; idem, “Holy Women, Holy Words: Early Christian Women, Social History, and the ‘Linguistic Turn,’” *J ECS* 6 (1999): 413–30; idem, “Ideology, History, and the Construction of ‘Woman’ in Late Ancient Christianity,” *J ECS* 2 (1994): 155–84; and Phyllis Culham, “Ten Years after Pomeroy: Studies of the Image and Reality of Women in Antiquity,” in *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity* (ed. M. R. Skinner; Lubbock, Tex.: Texas Tech University Press, 1987), 9–30. On the strategy of authorizing Christian identity by appealing to a legitimate male succession, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians: Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7–10.

as a refinement of, this trope, Tertullian's representation of Philumene shows that it is her illegitimate influence over a man that heightens the denigration of her leadership and the male she controls. Tertullian's description of Apelles' relationship to Philumene is instructive here. In the passage quoted above it is Apelles,³⁰ the second-century *heretic*, who introduced (*induxit*) a new heresy after he was introduced (*inductus*) to it by signs and illusions (*cuius signis et praestigiis*), which were the instruments of Philumene's influence or control. She is described as an angel of seduction (*angelum seductionis*) who transforms herself into an angel of light.³¹ Tertullian clearly understands Philumene to exercise a considerable influence over Apelles and, by implication, also over a wider community of followers. Nevertheless, the text identifies Apelles as the agent responsible for introducing the new heresy. In the context of the previous discussion on the meaning of heresy and its etymological connection to choice, one understands that Philumene chooses to introduce knowledge from her own authority (*arbitrio*) and that Apelles chooses that which she has introduced; moreover, he in turn introduces the new heresy that he received from her to the community. Tertullian hereby condemns these choices as originating from an illegitimate source.³²

In the next explicit reference to Philumene, Tertullian states that Apelles "struck upon" Philumene: "Returning therefrom, after some years, unimproved, except that . . . [Apelles] was no longer a Marcionite, he clave [*impegit*] to another woman, the maiden Philumene . . . who

³⁰ Apelles is the famous companion and disciple of Marcion; he seems to have left his master and attracted his own following. Harnack's interest in Marcion was largely responsible for providing the impetus for the studies on Apelles. See, for example, Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott: Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche* (2d ed.; TU 45; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1924), 177–96, 404–20. For recent work on Apelles, see Katharina Greschat, *Apelles und Hermogenes: Zwei Theologische Lehrer des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (VCSup 48; Leiden: Brill, 2000); Roman Hanig, "Der Beitrag der Philumene zur Theologie der Apelleianer," *ζΑC* 3 (1999): 241–77; and Eric Junod, "Les attitudes d'Apelles, disciple de Marcion à l'égard de l'Ancien Testament," *Augustinianum* 22 (1982): 113–33.

³¹ Tertullian alludes to Gal 1:8 in this context. At stake is the origin of truth, and one of the authorizing features of Philumene's seduction is her appearance as a cosmic medium: she purports to transmit truth from the spiritual realm. See further Kimberly B. Stratton's essay in this volume, where women are shown to be the victims of men's magic.

³² The fundamental argument of *Prescription against Heretics* is that legitimate Christian identities follow an authentic succession that originates with Christ and the apostles. Tertullian argues that heresies are always later than "truth" since they originate from subsequent individuals.

herself afterwards became an enormous prostitute. Having been imposed on by her vigorous spirit, he committed to writing the revelations that he had learned from her. Persons are still living who remember them—their own actual disciples and successors—who cannot therefore deny the lateness of their date.”³³ Although the verb used (*impegit*) is active (with Apelles as its implied subject), the subsequent clause attributes the controlling agency to Philumene’s overwhelming power (*cuius energemate circumventus*); it was this power that caused Apelles to write down the revelations that he learned from her. As was seen above, Philumene emerges as the initiator—and indeed seducer—and Apelles as the one who makes the choice. There is no explicit reference to Apelles introducing a new heresy in this passage. However, Tertullian notes here that there are still people living who remember Apelles and Philumene, indicating their influence but also signalling that Apelles’ power stemmed from Philumene’s (recent) revelations. As I will demonstrate, there are several aspects of both characters’ control over others and cognitive self-mastery that intersect with their gender in this section. First, the verb *impingo* indicates an agentive ambiguity performed by the masculine object, Apelles, so that his influence over the community is put into question because he himself is under the influence of a woman. In a co-ordinate way, I suggest that Philumene is represented as an influential human actor, although her influence is over the man and not the community directly, and, at the same time, she is under the spiritual control of evil spirits. Second, the passage draws on a variety of late antique gender stereotypes that shape its polemical spirit by inverting the normative hierarchy where the activity of men exercises influence over the passivity of women. Finally, and as an aspect of this stereotyping, the spiritual instruments of the woman that gain control over others are represented as evil spirits, which are outside

³³ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30.2–24 (ANF 3:257; CCSL 1:211): *Inde post annos regressus non melior nisi tantum qua iam non Marcionites, in alteram feminam impegit, illam uirginem Philumenem, quam supra edidimus, postea uero immane prostibulum et ipsam, cuius energemate circumuentus, quas ab ea didicit phanerōseis scripsit. Adhuc in saeculo supersunt qui meminerint eorum, etiam proprii discentes et successors ipsorum ne se posteriores negare possint.* This text appears in an extended *narratio*, in which Tertullian argues for the relative lateness of heretics and their heresies. For further analysis of the structure of *Prescription against Heretics*, see Charles Munier, “Analyse du traité de Tertullien *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*,” *RevScRel* 59 (1985): 12–33; and Robert D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian* (Oxford Theological Monographs; London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 25–28.

of her body and beyond her will, making her a medium for *their* influence.

These representations have some significant effects. First, they diminish Philumene's agency since her influence is mediated by evil spirits. It follows that she is susceptible to the lure of such malevolent external forces and that Apelles is similarly susceptible to her seduction.³⁴ Second, she represents a parallel and illegitimate source of divine knowledge. Tertullian establishes the following binary and opposite trajectories for his conception of truth:

Evil spirits	Philumene	Revelations	Apelles	community
Christ	Apostles	Rule of faith	Tertullian	community

A closer examination of each of these features above bears out Tertullian's rhetorical construction of gender. Initially, it is instructive to examine how Tertullian represents Apelles' move towards Philumene. Essentially the verb *impingo* refers to an activity of striking against, of making attachment or adherence. For example, one can fix (*impegerit*) one's eyes on something.³⁵ Significantly, Tertullian uses the verb several times to describe a person's disposition towards knowledge. Referring to believers falling out of truth and into various displays of error, one destination is described as "some ambiguous activity or blasphemy."³⁶ Later in the same work Tertullian asserts that pardon is denied those "who from belief have struck upon blasphemy . . ."³⁷ Of special interest to my argument is the appearance of this verb in *Praescr.* 4.19–23: "For he [the apostle Paul] does not order that they be understood approved who change faith into heresy, as they in opposition interpret his words for themselves when he [Paul] says in another place, 'test all things hold onto what is good' [1 Thess 5:21]. As if it were not possible, after testing all things

³⁴ The trajectory resonates with the Gen 3 sequence: Satan—woman—man. Tertullian, *Cult. fem.* 1.15, is infamous for the description of Eve as the devil's gateway (on the latter, see further Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1988], 153–54).

³⁵ Cf. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.7.25–27 (CCSL 1:553): *Apparere subitum ex inopinato sapit conspectum, qui semel impegerit oculos in id, quod sine mora apparuit* . . .

³⁶ Tertullian, *Pud.* 7.67–68 (ANF 3:81; CCSL 2:1293): . . . *in verbum ancipitis negotiationis aut blasphemiae impegit*.

³⁷ Tertullian, *Pud.* 13.80 (ANF 3:87; CCSL 2:1306): . . . *qui de fide blasphemiam impegerunt* . . .

wrongly, that one might strike (*impingere*) through error on some bad choice.”³⁸

The early sections of this work leading up to the passage cited above provide an exhortation drawn from Tertullian because of the wonder expressed by members of Tertullian’s community at the seeming efficacy of heresy. The efficacy is measured by the fact that some of the “best” people are going over to the other side: “It is usual, indeed, with persons of a weaker character, to be so built up (in confidence) by certain individuals who are caught by heresy, as to topple over into ruin themselves. How comes it to pass, (they ask), that this woman or that man, who were the most faithful, the most prudent, and the most approved in the church, have gone over to the other side?”³⁹ Tertullian has already suggested that this transfer of allegiance by these Christians represents not heresy’s efficacy but rather their faith’s infirmity. As a further step in this argument and as an asserted reason for the presence of heresy, Tertullian suggests that heresy exists for the purpose of validating the faith of those exposed. He alludes to 1 Cor 11:19, where it is suggested that heresy, like persecution, must exist in order to test the faithful. The passage cited above from *Praescr.* 4.19–23 illustrates a conception of choice, an explicit assessment of the concomitant responsibility for the choice one makes and the ambiguous or bilateral agentive sense of *impingo*, which includes both the agency of the chooser and the influence of what is chosen on account of its allure. It is as if the “all things” that are tested have an agency of their own. That the subject might strike upon (*impingo*) a bad choice (*electionem alicuius mali*) issues from the chooser’s cognitive incompetence so that they test all things wrongly. Tertullian both maintains agency in the human actor (indeed enough for condemnation if the choice is made according to their own authority), but at the same time he describes an inherent influence exercised by the allure of the thought content being weighed. The alternate truth claim, the heresy, is hypostasized as a power that

³⁸ My translation; CCSL 1:190: *Neque enim eos probabiles intelligi iubet qui in haeresim fidem demutant, sicut ex diuerso sibi interpretantur quia dixit alibi: omnia examine, quod bonum est tene. Quasi non liceat omnibus male examinatis in electionem alicuius mali impingere per errorem.*

³⁹ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 3.1–2 (ANF 3:244; CCSL 1:188): *Solent quidem isti miriones etiam de quibusdam personis ab haeresi captis aedificari in ruinam, quare illa uel ille fidelissimi prudentissimi et usitatissimi in ecclesia in illam partem transierunt?*

faith either resists or adheres to (*impingere*); in the latter case this results in the perversion and ultimate subversion of faith.⁴⁰

In a similar way, it is Apelles' assessment of Philumene's offer that leads him to follow her authority in the first place. She emerges as a medium for an alternate system of truth either to be resisted or by which to be seduced. That Apelles embraces her as an authority is evidence of his weakness. The significant agents are the woman transmitting the heresy, those seduced who choose her allure and the "faithful" able to resist her seduction. By error Apelles strikes upon a bad choice and emerges as "weak." By locating the initiative with Philumene, at least temporally if not also volitionally, the polemic functions as much on account of Apelles' weakness as it does on the basis of his immorality. This is because Apelles is depicted as lacking the quintessence of masculinity—self-mastery (both cognitive and physical). He embraces the revelations of Philumene, which are ultimately derived from evil spirits and packaged in the seductive form of a woman. In contrast, Tertullian manages his own self-identity as one who exercises the cognitive competence and subsequent self-mastery both to resist the emptiness of seduction and to receive only the "pure doctrine," untainted and self-evidently handed down by a legitimate succession from Christ. Ultimately, then, Tertullian juxtaposes himself and Apelles as the interfaces between revelation and the community—a weak man under the control of a woman and an ideal man able to resist her type, one who receives that which issues forth from Christ.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Once again this sequence represents the dominant orthodoxy as described by Bauer, which maps heresy as stemming (and bifurcating) from an already existing belief rather than arising from a simultaneously existing parallel belief.

⁴¹ Some scholars have been less inclined to focus on the influence of Philumene. The most comprehensive study of Tertullian's historical and literary context, by Timothy D. Barnes, has one single mention of Philumene. Describing techniques of slander that the "Christian sophist" might employ, Barnes attributes the initiative and agency to Apelles as if he were the agent of immoral choices (*Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1971], 217). Indeed, Tertullian attacks Apelles' moral credentials as one who seeks and *chooses* a woman. I am asserting, however, that the greater slander is that Apelles is seduced and that he emerges as a weakened non-ideal/normative masculine object as a result, unable to resist the control and initiative exercised by Philumene—a woman. It follows from this observation that Apelles is depicted with compromised self-control during the act of choosing. Elsewhere Tertullian uses a different kind of argument; for example, in *An.* 35 he labels Carpocrates a fornicator. The terminology in these instances more often refers to sex with unmarried women, which is an act that does not necessarily include seduction, thereby sustaining the normative male activity

This point can be further emphasized by the designation of Philumene as a “notable prostitute” (*imane prostibulum*) and seductress. Although the terminology is entirely recognizable as the deployment of existing stereotypes,⁴² the polemical nature is instructive for understanding Tertullian’s refiguring of a traditional discursive object. As noted earlier, the passage in general deals with the trajectory of heresy and especially the relative newness of both Marcion’s and Apelles’ heretical activity. In order to denigrate his character, Tertullian asserts that Apelles took the company of a woman when he left Marcion.⁴³ After this initial “falling” he “struck upon” Philumene, who is represented as both a seductive force and a prostitute. Tertullian elides the two mechanisms for seduction, both her spiritual and sexual control, by juxtaposing the *imane prostibulum* label with her instruments of spiritual attraction.⁴⁴ The fundamental accusation is that her attraction is based on fraud or deception. Indeed, Tertullian most habitually uses *seductio/seduco* and its cognates to translate ἀπάτη in New Testament allusions and direct quotations.⁴⁵ The sense of the seduction language, then, is that it refers to deceit, again aligning the deceived or seduced with weakness and the seducer/deceiver with (malicious) intention and instigation. Tertullian’s representation of

over against female passivity. The polemic in these cases is predicated on immorality rather than weakness. Similarly, elsewhere Tertullian (*Mon.* 16.2; CCSL 2:1251) implies that his opponent Hermogenes is weak in the flesh because he has been married numerous times (*Iterum nubere virum res est*). Again, although seduction is not explicitly part of the polemic, resistance, in this case resisting multiple marriages, is characterized as a strength. Thus, self-mastery remains a consistent element in Tertullian’s argumentative strategy.

⁴² See Tertullian, *Praescr.* 30, quoted above.

⁴³ The deponent verb *lapsus*, here depicting Apelles’ move towards Philumene, has the same kind of agentive ambiguity as *impingo*. Although Apelles is culpable for his “choice” of Philumene, Tertullian emphasizes his status as a weak non-ideal male by portraying him with compromised volition and weakened self-mastery. His ideal male other, in Tertullian’s mind, would no doubt have the cognitive competency to see Philumene’s revelations as the emptiness they actually are. For similar representations in the work of Lucian, see the essay by Erik Gunderson in this volume.

⁴⁴ For discussions on the actuality versus the representation of Philumene’s sexual immorality, see Hanig, “Beitrag der Philumene,” 241–77; and Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 197–99.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Tertullian, *Res.* 45.3–4 (CCSL 2:981): . . . *monente apostolo deponere nos veterem hominem, qui corrumpitur per concupiscentias seductionis* (its deceitful desires) . . . ; the latter of which translates Eph 4:22 (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης); and Tertullian, *Praescr.* 27.26–28 (CCSL 1:193): *Videte ne qui sit circumueniens uos per philosophiam et inanem seductionem* (empty deceit); the latter of which translates Col 2:8 (κενή ἀπάτης). For similar charges levied against Babylon in Revelation, see the essay by Chris Frilingos in this volume.

Philumene here thus emphasizes her sexual deception. Other explicit references to Philumene describe her as a *virgo* or *angelus*.⁴⁶ The seduction or deceit in these texts is brought about by her ability to instrumentalize spiritual energy in order to deceive Apelles. Clearly this gendering draws on an already existing discursive store, in which women are represented as more susceptible to illegitimate spiritual activity. The description nevertheless indicates real and actual activity by the woman Philumene by which she exercised significant influence.⁴⁷

Hence, where Philumene exhibits control in the narrative, it is almost always exercised via instruments beyond her, stemming from spiritual energy. This has the effect of maintaining the stereotype of females as passive, unable to resist the approaches of evil spirits. Yet Philumene is still able to exercise influence as a medium, thus representing the subjectivity of women as vulnerable to illegitimate spiritual expression and their inability to exercise cognitive self-mastery. The earliest tradition of Philumene bears this stereotype out.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there are four other explicit references to Philumene in Tertullian. Two of them occur in *De carne Christi* and refer to Philumene's spiritual energy.⁴⁹ There are only two references in Tertullian that represent the agency of Philumene as being the result of her own volition. In *An.* 36, Tertullian states that Apelles had learned (*didicit*) from Philumene.⁵⁰ In *Marc.* 3.11, Tertullian suggests

⁴⁶ Cf. Tertullian, *Praescr.* 6.18–19; 30.22; *Carn. Chr.* 6.7; 24.14.

⁴⁷ Indeed, Hanig ("Beitrag der Philumene") has recently shown that Philumene is most responsible for the development of Apelles' Christology after he left Marcion.

⁴⁸ According to Eusebius, Rhodo, the pupil of the apologist Tatian, asserts that Philumene prophesies because she is possessed by a demon: Apelles "was persuaded by the utterances of a possessed maiden named Philumene" (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.13; LCL). Cf. Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.26; 10.16; and Ps.-Tertullian, *Adversus omnes haereses* 6, all of which focus on Philumene's revelatory abilities and her role as the instructor of Apelles.

⁴⁹ See Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 6.7–9 (*ANF* 3:526): "[Apelles] . . . having first fallen from the principles of Marcion into (intercourse with) a woman, in the flesh, and afterwards shipwrecked himself, in the spirit, on the virgin Philumene . . ."; CCL 2:883: . . . *in mulierem carne lapsus et dehinc in virginem Philumenen spiritu eversus est*. Tertullian (*Carn. Chr.* 24.14; *ANF* 3:542) asserts that Gal 1:8 "... calls attention to the artful influence of Philumene, the virgin friend of Apelles"; CCL 2:916: . . . *ad energema Apelleiacae virginis Philumenes filium dirigit*.

⁵⁰ See Tertullian, *An.* 36.14–15 (CCL 2:838): . . . *quoniam et Apelles, non pictor, sed haereticus, ante corpora constituens animas uiriles ac muliebres, sicut a Philumena didicit, utique carnem ut posteriorem ab anima facit accipere sexum*.

that Philumene persuaded (*persuasit*) Apelles.⁵¹ The fact that Tertullian represents Philumene in at least two instances with personal control over Apelles, as a teacher and persuader, reflects a measure of the influence that he imagined she had over Apelles. That he resorts to the discursive tropes of the female as seducer and as an unscrupulous spiritual and illegitimate entity signals his attempt to denigrate Apelles as a weak man seduced and deceived by a woman. This rhetorical move in turn builds the status of those who, like Tertullian, resist her and the heresy that she transmits.

CONCLUSION

As a strategy to manage a Christian orthodoxy that recognizes a unique and self evident truth, Tertullian constructs heretics who promote alternative truths that consist of emptiness and deceit. The heretics' proximity to the orthodox Christian identity is established by their same claim to assent to truth about God. Since Tertullian's orthodoxy cannot permit these different truths, he delegitimizes the cognitive process of these "Others" so that their method used to arrive at truth is undermined. To accomplish this end, Tertullian intertwines discourses related to self-mastery (cognitive and physical), strength and resistance with unscrupulous volition and cognitive ineptitude/failure. Faith is represented as the strength to resist deceit. Heresy is constructed as a form of knowledge that issues forth from deception and seduction. Thinking competence is marked out by those who receive what is passed on as legitimate thought and resist any unsanctioned excess knowledge beyond the rule of faith.

The symbol of the heretical woman sharpens this requirement of resistance or cognitive self-mastery by functioning as an opposing and negative foil for her male counterpart. She exercises an unscrupulous disposition toward the knowledge she receives. Hence, she transmits deceit precisely because she lacks the cognitive competency to resist it, thus functioning as a passive medium for evil spirits. The ideal male resists her seduction by recognizing that her revelations

⁵¹ See Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.11.15–17 (CCSL 1:520): *Nam et Philumene illa magis persuasit Apelli ceterisque desertoribus Marcionis ex fide quidem Christum circumtulisse carnem, nullius tamen natiuitatis, utpote de elementis eam mutuatum.*

are from evil spirits packaged in the alluring form of a woman. Tertullian portrays Apelles as one who is under the control of such a woman and thereby delegitimizes the knowledge transmitted to Apelles' community. In the process, Tertullian (re)produces both his own self-identity and the identity of those in his group as "real" men, descending from other males of a similar type and ultimately from Christ, who is the prototype of them all.

MEN OF LEARNING:
THE CULT OF *PAIDEIA* IN LUCIAN'S *ALEXANDER*

Erik Gunderson

In his essay *Alexander or the False Prophet*, Lucian offers an exposé of the history of a prophet named Alexander who, sometime around 140 to 145 c.e., set up a new cult of Asclepius in Abonuteichus, a city on the south coast of the Black Sea.¹ The cult had an impressive geographical reach and chronological span: its influence was felt both in the Greek East and at Rome itself, and the cult still seems to have been active even in the fourth century c.e.² I wish to explore the work the text does in the course of telling this story. Specifically, Lucian builds a counter-cult in honor of learning and culture in the same gesture as he lays waste to the cult of Alexander.

¹ Lucian himself was in Abonuteichus in 165 c.e. *Alexander or the False Prophet* was written some time after 180 c.e. (cf. Ulrich Victor, *Lukian von Samosata: Alexandros oder der Lügenprophet* [RGRW 132; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 19–20). On the “charlatanism” debate, see Eugène de Faye, “Alexandre d’Abonotique a-t-il été un charlatan ou un fondateur de religion?,” *Revue d’Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 5 (1925): 201–7; and Marcel Caster, *Études sur ‘Alexandre ou le faux prophète’ de Lucien* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1938), 99–102. One should note that the age itself was full of complex religious innovations and transformations of which this cult is but a single example.

² On the cult, see Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 1; Christopher P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 138; and Caster, *Études sur ‘Alexandre ou le faux prophète’*, 94–98 (cf. 61: “Le goût des mystères était très vif à cette époque et notamment en Asie Mineure, où ils se multipliaient”; for a discussion of these specific mysteries alongside others, see 61–64). Coins and statues depicting Glycon the anthropomorphic snake have survived and they can still be seen today. For the images, see Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 181–84. Also see Ernest Babelon, “Le faux prophète Alexandre d’Abonotichos,” *Revue Numismatique* 4 (1900): 1–30. Babelon’s essay reveals complicating issues: the snake does not always have a human head; sometimes there are two snakes. There are even connections between Glycon and the gnostic serpent Chnoubis (see 28–30). We ought to imagine a complex and fertile religious moment that Lucian aims to radically simplify and close down.

GENRE

Throughout this essay I am rejecting the thesis that, as this is Lucian, everything about the text is but a joke.³ Such an approach makes for an ideal beginning to a reading of the satirist, but the issue cannot end there.⁴ The jokes are not, as they say, “mere jokes.” R. Bracht Branham’s description of the “seriocomic” is useful in this regard: it is “a flexible set of literary methods to which disorienting and subversive effects of humor are instrumental.”⁵ Despite a certain measure of hyperbole, the *Alexander* is situated in a vivid and concrete milieu. This conjured actuality gives sting to the narration of the absurdities recounted in the text.⁶ However, this very notion of a Lucian who conjures reality already gets us to a key irony of the text: the narrator constantly reminds us of that other conjurer of would-be verities, Alexander.

Tim Whitmarsh sensibly criticizes readings that look for a single and consistent “Lucian” beneath the many narrative masks on display in his works.⁷ I would not go so far as Whitmarsh and claim that Lucian’s texts are “open-ended and self-undermining explorations of the conflicts between different claims for cultural authority.”⁸ Much of what Lucian writes may be open-ended and self-undermining, and much of what he writes may explore the conflicts between different

³ On the “fundamental disagreements about [Lucian’s] generic intentions,” see R. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Revealing Antiquity 2; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 13; cf. 183 for a discussion of overcoming the either/or of the “fictive” versus “actual” approaches to this text. Jacques Bompaigne finds in Lucian only play in and with a bookish universe (*Lucien écrivain: Imitation et création* [Paris: Boccard, 1958], 536). Graham Anderson relies on a parallel premise: each work of Lucian is to be read in the light of all the others (*Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic* [MnSup 41; Leiden, Brill, 1976]). Bompaigne’s bold proposition naturally encounters its inverse. See C. Panagopoulos, “Lucian ou la vraie vie,” in *Hommages à Lucian Lerat* (ed. H. Walter; Paris: Les belles lettres, 1984), 597–606 (598), for the claim that “tout chez Lucien, jusque dans l’expression, est en fait satire d’actualité.” Compare as well the tenor of the article by Barry Baldwin, “Lucian as Social Satirist,” *CQ* 11 (1961): 199–208.

⁴ See Branham’s discussion of *spoudogeloios* (*Unruly Eloquence*, 26–28).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶ As Caster notes, “Dans certains passages, et souvent les plus arbitraires . . . il imagine avec tant de vraisemblance et enchaîne si bien son récit que rien ne semble plus innocemment raconté. On croit voir se dérouler la vérité elle-même, simple et naïve” (*Études sur ‘Alexandre ou le faux prophète’*, 92).

⁷ Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 251–52.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

claims for cultural authority, but it is not clear that we are ever intended to entertain seriously the notion that being, for example, an ignorant pathic from Gaul is not a multiply illegitimate condition or that education and normative manliness, though difficult and contested categories, are not substantial components of a legitimate one.⁹ Branham's remarks on the seriocomic allow us to retain the idea that Lucian's humor can and will be pointed. I think, however, that Whitmarsh gets closer to the psychic truth of the matter when he notes the systematic deferral of the consummation of the desire of the *pepaideumenos*.¹⁰ Specifically, being-educated is an always-almost achieved state. We are speaking less of men who "are" educated than of a durable process of striving towards an ever-elusive goal. The specific recipe, though, gives one pause: a little more self- and other-cruelty is frequently the means for making further headway towards this end.

In light of this discussion, then, the *Alexander* need not be declared an out and out history,¹¹ but there is nevertheless something veridical about it: the reality-effect conjured by the social context woven into the text serves to emphasize the absurdity of Alexander's sham cult.¹² This text thus differs from something like Lucian's *Judicium vocalium*. In that work Sigma sues Tau for encroaching on his rights before a court of vowels. The text's charm comes from its purely phantasmatic quality.¹³ Conversely, the *Alexander* relies on its dogged specificity about persons, places and things.

⁹ See Erik Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (The Body, in Theory; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), for an account of the inescapable reinvestment in *paideia*.

¹⁰ Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 282.

¹¹ Jones detects a number of fabricated details (*Culture and Society*, 133–48). He is by no means alone. A core project of Caster, *Etudes sur 'Alexandre ou le faux prophète'*, is sifting for the historical truths lurking underneath the literary reworking given them by Lucian. Graham Anderson notes a number of "novelistic" echoes in the *Alexander* (*Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction* [MnSup 43; Leiden: Brill, 1976]). Although, for a defense of Lucian's historical accuracy in the *Alexander*, see Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 8–26.

¹² See Bompaigne, *Lucien écrivain*, 477, on "actualité" as distinguished from "vérité" in works like *Peregrinus* and *Alexander*.

¹³ See Barry Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), 58–59; although, on the *Iudicium*, he notes: "No part of Lucian's output was more contemporary in application; no more conventional in inspiration." That is, many people really did care about such issues. Cf. Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1993), 86.

The snide attack on Alexander yields what is effectively a gospel-like message.¹⁴ The bad news about the false prophet also contains good news about both Lucian and his reader.¹⁵ This good news, uttered in the narrative present, straddles a past perfect and a future perfect: the already educated man will have been able to be saved from the false cult of Alexander.¹⁶ As one falls another rises, and so Lucian's essay works to adumbrate a parallel mystery cult, that of *paideia* itself.¹⁷ The text, then, is a mystery play that re-stages the rites of learning for initiates both new and old. Educated eyes review the mysteries of Alexander and see in them a hollow sham. In so reviewing Alexander's cult, however, these same learned eyes simultaneously fill themselves with an august plenitude, namely, the sense of their own salvation from the very hopes and fears in which an Alexander traffics.

In what follows, I will explore the details of this double vision and double action of the *Alexander*. In particular, the text forges a homosocial bond between man and man that refuses the sort of hierarchical and abusive sexual bonds that Alexander himself forges.¹⁸ The text allows for a sense of the legitimate hegemony of the entitled bearers of culture who in turn overthrow the illegitimate authority of conniving pretenders to power. The text accordingly emphasizes cultural capital and literary education, that is, *paideia*, as the tie that binds the free and free-spoken man to his peers. This same *paideia* allows one to

¹⁴ For a straightforward exploration of "piety and *paideia*" in the Second Sophistic, see Anderson, *Second Sophistic*, 200–15. This treatment includes a discussion of the "Christian Sophistic" as well.

¹⁵ On the programmatic role of *παιδεία* in Lucian's texts, see Wolfgang Fauth, "Pseudophilosophen bei Lukian: Iatromagie und Teratologie in den Lügenfreunden," *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* n.f. 26 (2002): 113–33 (113).

¹⁶ My position converges in many instances with Branham's rich read of the *Alexander* in Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 181–210. Readers would profit by consulting it.

¹⁷ *Paideia* is perhaps the central concept within Lucian. On its omnipresence in Lucian, see Jones, *Culture and Society*, 149. Within the Second Sophistic more generally, Whitmarsh observes: "*Paideia* was not a single, doctrinally coherent system, but the locus for a series of competitions and debates concerning the proper way in which life should be lived" (*Greek Literature*, 5). Also see Whitmarsh's ample bibliography (328–64). For the strong sense of "*paideia* versus religion" in Lucian, see Marcel Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1937), 365–68, 388–89.

¹⁸ On sex and *paideia*, the *locus classicus* is Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Also see Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 109–16.

refuse and to see through the tyranny of an Alexander, a conqueror who threatens to overwhelm the world not by saving men as his name might imply (ἀλέξ-ανδρος), but by dooming them to fall under his sway.

I am looking, then, both at the story of Alexander in the *Alexander* and at the story of the *Alexander* itself. I will be making a double reading of the text in order to understand the doubled perspective that the text itself encourages. This approach implies a sort of complicity with one of the central theses of the work itself: the careful, erudite and trained eyes of educated people let nothing slip past them. As scholars and skilled readers we ourselves are “naturally” inclined to look beneath deceptive surfaces and to congratulate ourselves for so doing. However, let us at once correct this impression: we need to see in our own “natural” inclinations as readers instead a “second nature” that has been laboriously achieved even if one does tend to think of it as a “natural nature” after long habituation. It is, then, all too easy for us to remain complacent about the origins of our own faith in the cult of the educated eye. In so doing we only allow Lucian to work his own magic on us.

My point is both general and specific, both about “we readers” and “we readers of this particular text.” The *Alexander* and the way in which the story is told recapitulate the logic of a mystery cult, and the text asks of its readers a renewal of their faith in the Mysteries of Education. If the text does a kind of work, then, the reader is invited to participate in this very same work. We are asked to be engaged readers, complicit ones, even. The text is addressed to initiates. The learned reader becomes a participant in a mystery-play that reinforces his or her faith in the cult of Education as Enlightenment. However, to be cynical about this cynical author Lucian, we can declare that this cult of *paideia* is promulgated by a narratological mummery that our credulous faith in erudition exhorts us to disavow.

In order to unpack this argument in fuller detail, I first wish to offer a brief overview of the flow of the *Alexander* as a whole. Then I will explore the ways in which the figure of Alexander represents an inverted double of the figure of the narrator himself. After that I will examine the ways in which this double contends against the narrator. Or, put differently, I will look at Lucian and Alexander and then Lucian against Alexander. The status of “Lucian” is in fact the third major branch of my argument. That is, I will end by looking

at the movement between author, narrator and character taking place in and around the *Alexander*.¹⁹ The process by which we come to see this trinity as a unity named “Lucian” is itself a key element of the mystery of the cult of *paideia*. This cult offers us an eschatology and a theodicy of The Educated Man. This latter figure is an end in itself, and a just one at that. The literary sublime offers us salvation from the carnal and carnivalesque absurdity of Alexander even as we nevertheless partake in both just long enough to repudiate them.

OUTLINE OF THE *ALEXANDER*

The *Alexander* presents itself as a piece written at a friend’s request (*Alex.* 1): Celsus has asked for an account of the false prophet.²⁰ The narrator complies after expressing a due sense of shame on his own and his reader’s behalf: Alexander is something unworthy of both parties (2). Next follows an overview of Alexander, his body and his mind (3–4). Then we read a pre-history that includes his scandalous youth and how he arrived at the idea for his snake-cult (5–7). Cynical charades establish the cult: the Paphlagonians are convinced that they have themselves seen the birth and sudden growth of the divine snake with a human head (8–15). The narrator exposes how Alexander gets down to business: Alexander would furtively unseal questions put to the oracle, answer them and then return the original requests seemingly unopened.

¹⁹ I will not be able to do justice to a variety of intra-textual relationships subsisting between the various treatises that also corroborate this sense that the “I” of the text is Lucian, the author of the *Opera Luciani*. But certain key connections between this text and others in the *corpus* will be adduced below. While not a narratological argument, nevertheless see the remarks of Michael Weissenberger, *Literaturtheorie bei Lukian: Untersuchungen zum Dialog Lexiphanes* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1996), 127–50 (which deals with “Die Person des Scribenden” in Lucian). Though written in a somewhat different context, Sandrine Dubel’s maxim applies to this narratological situation as well: “Lucien est ainsi un auteur qui se dérobe en se démultipliant” (“Dialogue et autoportrait: les masques de Lucian,” in *Lucien de Samosate* [ed. A. Billaut; Centre d’Études Romaines et Gallo-Romaines ns 13; Paris: Boccard, 1994], 19–26 [26]).

²⁰ Cf. Lucian’s *De morte Peregrinus*, which opens as if it were a letter to Cronios concerning an event that actually occurred in 165 C.E., when the Cynic Peregrinus hurled himself on a pyre in order to commit suicide. The narrator and his addressee have gathered to laugh: Πολλὰ τοίνυν δοκῶ μοι ὄραν σε γελῶντα ἐπὶ τῇ κορύζῃ τοῦ γέροντος . . . (*Peregr.* 2).

The oracle turns into big business and becomes more and more famous (16–24). Challengers arise: Epicureans in particular doubt the legitimacy of Alexander's enterprise (25). After this interlude the narrative returns to the details of the cult: we learn of how the snake-puppet would speak, the famous oracles it delivered and the revision of errant oracles (26–28). Alexander also makes sure to ingratiate himself with other oracular sites by sending them business (29).

When news of the oracle makes it to Rome, it excites the city. Prominent citizens start sending questions to it (30) and Alexander is able to gain influence with the Roman elite by skillfully handling his noble petitioners. An old and superstitious man named Rutilianus becomes particularly captivated (31–34). The oracle advises him to marry Alexander's daughter, a child allegedly conceived when the moon fell in love with him (35). Alexander is becoming important and he is pressing his advantages (36). He now sends spies to Rome itself to scout out questions in advance. The sinister and conspiratorial aspects of his behavior are increasingly palpable (37).

Meanwhile, back in Paphlagonia, Alexander sets up a mystery cult modeled on more famous ones such as the Eleusinian mysteries. The narrator reveals to us the contents of the rites and ceremonies performed over several days (38–40). This narrative blends into an account of Alexander's sex life. He forbids pederasty among his followers and yet keeps a flock of choir-boys as his personal playthings (41). He sleeps with married women, and the husbands are even eager to declare that their own children are in fact Alexander's bastards (42). At this point we hear again of opposition to Alexander. Epicureans challenge him. Alexander makes sure to persecute them, with the result that being labeled an Epicurean by him can be hazardous to one's health (43–47).

The critique of the oracle becomes more scattershot, but we are transitioning towards the arrival of a specific critic, the narrator himself, Lucian. We hear, then, of a disastrous oracle during a war against the Germans (48). We learn that business is so good that Alexander has to start "sleeping on" oracles in order to increase his output (49). Sometimes spontaneous oracles are produced just to amaze people (50). Some are even in foreign languages: barbarians are starting to consult the god (51).

We reach a crescendo, though, when the narrator tells of how he himself challenged Alexander. He would ask nasty questions and seal them well. He would have his servants pretend a question was about

one thing when the written petition was really about another (53–54). There are public confrontations and abuse (55), attempts at bribery (56) and even a murder plot directed against Lucian (56–57). The narrative comes to a close as Lucian describes how, contrary to his own prophecies, Alexander does not die by a thunderbolt at the age of 150. He instead falls to an illness that rotted him from within (60). The final section offers a reflection on the relationship between narrator and reader and on the usefulness of Epicureanism (61).

DOUBLES

The narrative of the *Alexander* is thoroughly sarcastic. The tone is mocking. The exalted prophet comes across as a risible fraud. The opening conceit is never far from us: this is another Alexander the Great, but, instead of virtue, it is vice that makes this Alexander superlative.²¹ And yet this dominant thread of the narrative should not obscure from us the fact that Alexander is not just any old scoundrel. Instead he is a double for the narrator, a sinister twin of the very figure that transmits this history to us.²²

Praise of Alexander's cleverness inevitably reminds us of the cleverness of the man who tells Alexander's story. One self-made man comments on another.²³ The narrator reports with wit and charm. His tale is packed with erudite allusions. And, most importantly, this is a story told by a man who saw through the clever schemes of Alexander. The polish of the whole text thus serves as an implicit challenge to Alexander's cleverness. And the derision of the verse oracles is only the most explicit aspect of this confrontation between canny word-artists.

While Alexander sets himself up as a sort of tyrant over men's hopes and fears,²⁴ Epicureanism, conversely, is lauded for freeing

²¹ τοσοῦτος εἰς κακίαν οὗτος, ὅσος εἰς ἀρετὴν ἐκεῖνος (*Alex.* 1).

²² In a similar vein, compare the monster Catiline as a double for Sallust who narrates his story. See Erik Gunderson, "The History of Mind and the Philosophy of History in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*," *Ramus* 29 (2000): 85–126.

²³ Being-educated is always implicitly a positive referendum on the *pepaideumenos*. But we can also compare the "autobiographical" narrative of Lucian's *Somnium* for a sense of how erudition is a willed state. For a biography of Lucian derived from his essays, see Jones, *Culture and Society*, 8–23. Also see Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 126–27, regarding the ironies and ambiguities of Lucian as a self-made *pepaideumenos*.

²⁴ Hope and fear are major themes of the text. They are part of the original

men from hope and fear: the books of Epicurus instill in their readers a sense of security and liberty; they dispel fears, fantasies, empty hopes and excessive desires.²⁵ Epicurus is associated not just with the general opposition to Alexander; he also appears as the intellectual tie that binds author and reader in the final section of the *Alexander*.²⁶ Furthermore, if Alexander is building a quasi-tyrannical society replete with spies and a coterie of dependents, the narrator implicitly belongs to a world of free gentlemen enjoying the fruits available to an international cultured elite in the context of the Roman Empire.²⁷

Simon Goldhill has explored at some length this trope of the cultured elite in his examination of Lucian's *Anacharsis*. Goldhill offers the following programmatic overview of the complexity of the theme "culture" in Lucian: "The foreigner Lucian—from the East—writing in Greek for a cultured audience in the Roman Empire, imagines an eastern foreigner's bemused reaction to a central—but now contested—Greek institution; and offers a defence of it distanced by its provenance from the mouth of an antique hero of the state—all written in a carefully articulated Attic Greek of the classical era."²⁸

calculus that leads to the founding of the cult when Alexander and his ally consider how to get ahead in the world: ῥαδίως κατενόησαν τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίον ὑπὸ δυοῖν τούτοις μεγίστοις τυραννούμενον, ἐλπίδος καὶ φόβου . . . (*Alex.* 8).

²⁵ Cf. the scene when the prophet demands that Epicurus's books be burned: Πυρπολέειν κέλομαι δόξας ἀλασιό γέροντος: οὐκ εἰδὼς ὁ κατάρατος ὅσων ἀγαθῶν τὸ βιβλίον ἐκεῖνο τοῖς ἐντυχοῦσιν αἴτιον γίγνεται, καὶ ὅσῃν αὐτοῖς εἰρήνην καὶ ἀταραξίαν καὶ ἐλευθερίαν ἐνεργάζεται, δειμάτων μὲν καὶ φασμάτων καὶ τεράτων ἀπαλλάττον καὶ ἐλπίδων ματαίων καὶ περιττῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, νοῦν δὲ καὶ ἀλήθειαν ἐντιθὲν καὶ καθαῖρον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὰς γνώμας . . . (*Alex.* 47). On the pairing of hope and fear as an Epicurean theme, also see Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 136–37.

²⁶ On the numerous positive evaluations of Epicurus in Lucian's works, see Jones, *Culture and Society*, 26–28. For a review of Lucian's relationship to various philosophical schools, see Wilson H. Tackaberry, *Lucian's Relation to Plato and the Post-Aristotelian Philosophers* (University of Toronto Studies, Philological Series 9; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930); cf. 46–51 for Lucian's generally sympathetic relationship to Epicurus. Caster offers a detailed account of both second-century Epicureanism and Lucian's relationship to Epicurus (*Lucien et la pensée religieuse*, 84–106). In particular, Caster also notes that Lucian is interested in the figure of Epicurus and in Epicurean themes, not in Epicurean dogma: "Lucien ne montre nulle part une connaissance technique des dogmes et des raisonnements épicuriens" (98). Moreover, Epicureanism deprecates the very term in which Lucian is most invested, *paideia* (102).

²⁷ Cf. Jones's comments in this respect: "In real life Lucian appears to take Rome and its institutions for granted" (*Culture and Society*, 89).

²⁸ Simon Goldhill, "Introduction. Setting an Agenda: 'Everything Is Greece to

Herein one observes “the formulation of Greekness in process.”²⁹ Let us apply, then, the lessons of the *Anacharsis* to the *Alexander*. Though a text like the *Alexander* assumes a cultured milieu, we have to explore the manner in which the very thing presupposed is simultaneously being constructed before our very eyes.³⁰ The shape and the quality of the cultural-political space is hotly contested in this text: both Alexander’s and the narrator’s ties to Rome emerge as a particular point of friction between them: what kind of Eastern Greek is going to matter back in Rome?³¹ In fact, it becomes clear that Alexander is far more influential than Lucian.³² Thus, Alexander really is something of a conqueror while Lucian is but a prominent subject.

Two untidy elements of the antithesis between the narrator and Alexander remain: good looks and bad sex. These are more elusive qualities, and pointedly so when it comes time to talk of the narrator. The narrator is by definition invisible; he does not look either good or bad in as much as he is not there to be looked at at all. This proposition is even more strongly the case when we distinguish between the Lucian who acts as a character in the text, the Lucian who narrates it and the Lucian who writes the *Alexander*. The last is fundamentally invisible and correspondingly immaculate as a pure figure of our own conception. The sublimity of Lucian the Author will preoccupy us in the end. But for the time being I am satisfied

the Wise’,” in *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (ed. S. Goldhill; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–25 (2).

²⁹ Ibid., 20. I would direct the reader to the rest of the essays in Goldhill’s *Being Greek under Rome*, as each are dedicated to similar explorations of this phenomenon.

³⁰ Also see Rebecca Preston, “Roman Questions, Greek Answers: Plutarch and the Construction of Identity,” in Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome*, 86–119 (86–91); and Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 90–130, as well as their extensive bibliographies.

³¹ On Lucian the Syrian, see Jones, *Culture and Society*, 6–8. Regarding the many ironies of Lucian(?)’s *de dea Syria*, also see Jaś Elsner, “Describing Self in the Language of the Other: Pseudo(?) Lucian at the Temple of Hierapolis,” in Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome*, 123–53. Elsner in fact complicates the position of Jones (*Society and Culture*, 89; cf. n. 27 above) when he concludes, “Ironically, the *Pax Romana* has created the very conditions of its own profound irrelevance.” That is, what is “non-Roman” within the context of a global empire?

³² On the historical Lucian more generally, see the following comment by Glen W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 114: “Perhaps Lucian, prolific as he was, was not very important; his Greek and his wit will adequately explain his survival. With that admitted, we may detect other indications that Lucian, in the end, was not a person of consequence.” Bowersock observes as well that Lucian’s attacks are on “undeserved success,” not on success per se (116).

merely to indicate that there is yet another antithesis between Lucian and Alexander here, but a multi-layered one in that “Lucian” has multiple relationships to and within the text.

If looking at Lucian is already a difficult proposition, exploring his sexual ethics is similarly problematic. In this case, however, we will ultimately find a key displacement: the amity between the narrator Lucian and the addressee Celsus is predicated on the refusal of the sexualized life of Alexander *tout court*. In fact, the desire to hear of Alexander on Celsus’s part and the desire—though tempered with a double “shame” (Αἰδοῦμαι μὲν οὖν ὑπὲρ ἄμφοιν . . .; *Alex.* 2)—to speak of him on the narrator’s part are all that remain of the sexual. In other words, the inverse of Alexander’s sexuality is an empty space around which the amicable couple gathers.³³ They assemble, then, not to be sexual subjects themselves, but to examine and to denounce the sex lives of others.³⁴

We should hesitate before taking the various specific charges leveled against Alexander as historical truths: they are extremely familiar reproaches.³⁵ We can, however, take this very familiarity a step further: it is convention itself that makes Alexander so readily legible for the educated reader. The learned “conventionally” sexualize their foes, and they do so with monotonous regularity. The *Alexander* itself becomes the chaste object that replaces the unchaste body of Alexander in a movement that translates worldly *corpus* into a literary one.

As a pair themselves, Celsus and Lucian have a parodic analogue within the *Alexander*. As Lucian and Celsus have gathered in a virtual textual space to dismantle the new cult, so too did Alexander and Cocconas once join together to concoct the very same cult. Cocconas was a composer of choral songs from Byzantium. The narrator

³³ On the “just friends” quality of literary encounters in antiquity, see Erik Gunderson, “Catullus, Pliny, and Love-Letters,” *TAPA* 127 (1997): 201–31.

³⁴ *Caveat spectator*: cf. Simon Goldhill, “The Erotic Eye: Visual Stimulation and Cultural Conflict,” in Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome*, 154–94 (157), where he explores the erotics of the *pepaideumenos theates*. For Goldhill, “the regime of the visual becomes fully imbricated in the politics of language and power” (193). Zahra Newby, “Testing the Boundaries of *Ekphrasis*: Lucian on the Hall,” *Ramus* 31 (2002): 126–35, follows up on Goldhill’s themes.

³⁵ On separating fact from fiction in the *Alexander*, see the following comment by Jennifer Hall: “One must obviously ignore all the conventional accusations of the invective that Lucian makes against Alexander, such as his penchant for choir boys and his affairs with married women” (*Lucian’s Satire* [New York: Arno, 1981], 210). Cf. Caster, *Etudes sur ‘Alexandre ou le faux prophète’*, 88–89.

declares him to be an even more accursed character than Alexander himself. Cocconas's own status as an artist, though, brings to mind the complex literary themes of the narrative of the *Alexander* itself. Cocconas plays a vital part in the choreography of the perverse public spectacle that he produces in tandem with Alexander, namely the cult itself. This original spectacle as composed by Cocconas finds its analogue in the elaborate satiric orchestration of literary genres within the *Alexander*. The *Alexander* variously evokes history, epic, lyric, dialogue and, most pointedly, tragedy.³⁶ This polyphonous harmony of genres inverts the artistry of Cocconas by troping and trumping it.

In fact, the pair Lucian-Celsus itself points to yet another pair, Alexander-Rutilianus, or the prophet and the credulous old Roman. Both pairs are characterized by the one party telling the other party "how things really stand." In each case one man asks the other for information. Celsus, though, is an equal to Lucian. He too has authored a book on charlatans (κατὰ μάγων; 21). And on more than one occasion we are told that "you," that is Celsus, already know how things really stand. Thus, Celsus is always already unfooled in this text even as Rutilianus is always already fooled.³⁷ The introduction of Rutilianus makes as much explicit: before he even meets Alexander he was a man who was ready to worship just about anything.³⁸ Rutilianus is not Alexander's equal but his dupe. Hope and fear have enslaved him. The degrading and un-Roman *proskynesis* he was literally willing to show a sacred rock he now metaphorically shows Alexander.

There are even traces of an ugly sexual aspect to this situation, although they are distinctly displaced. First, Alexander's pederasty

³⁶ For history, see *Alexander* 8: καὶ κατὰ τὸν Θουκυδίδην ἄρχεται ὁ πόλεμος ἐνθένδε ἤδη; cf. epic in 5 and 56; lyric (παλινωδῶν) in 28; dialogue in 43; and tragedy in 12 (τοιαύτης τραγωδίας, συντραγωδήσων, πρωταγωνιστής) and 60 (Τοιοῦτο τέλος τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τραγωδίας). On the Thucydidean aspects of Lucian's own historical works, see Weissenberger, *Literaturtheorie bei Lukian*, 134–37; and Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 9–12. One can note as well abundant use of the tragedy metaphor in *Peregrinus*, which is something of a cousin to this text. See Anderson, *Lucian*, 72–77, for a detailed examination of the similarities between the two works.

³⁷ Contrast συνίης δὲ used of Celsus (*Alex.* 32) with the sarcastic depiction of Rutilianus: ὁ συνετώτατος Ῥουτιλιανός (*Alex.* 35).

³⁸ Ῥουτιλιανός, ἀνὴρ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐν πολλαῖς τάξεσι Ῥωμαϊκαῖς ἐξητασμένος, τὰ δὲ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς πάνυ νοσῶν καὶ ἀλλόκοτα περὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιστευκός, εἰ μόνον ἀλημιμένον που λίθον ἢ ἐστεφανωμένον θεάσαιτο, προσπίπτων εὐθὺς καὶ προσκυνῶν καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ παρεστὼς καὶ εὐχόμενος καὶ τάγαθὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ αἰτῶν (*Alex.* 30).

involves keeping well-born boys as if they were to sing hymns to the god, but he in fact treats them like slaves. “Like slaves” here specifically means using them sexually (οὗς ἐγκλεισάμενος ὥσπερ ἀργυρωνήτοις ἐχρήτο, συγκαθεύδων καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἐπαροινῶν; 41). The figure of the fate of the free under Alexander thus has a figurative and a literal sense: Rutilianus is metaphorically used like a slave; these boys are literally so used. A second displaced sexualization of the Alexander-Rutilianus pair comes in the passage where we hear about “a certain Rutilia” (Ρουτιλία τις; 39). She is the wife of one of Caesar’s stewards who plays the role of Selene in Alexander’s mystery pageant. They act out the conception of Alexander’s daughter and Lucian asserts that not only are Rutilia and Alexander in fact actually lovers, but that even the scene of love they perform would have been an actual congress if they could have gotten away with it. The observation I would like to make, though, is that in more than one sense “Rutilia” sounds an awful lot like “Rutilianus.” She is swept up in Alexander’s crazy theater as an eager participant. Her performance is shameful for herself personally and yet it consolidates Alexander’s prestige. Thus, even as Alexander is not literally penetrating Rutilianus, his treatment of well-born free children and his behavior with a woman with a similar name allow us to draw our own dark conclusion: “Rutilianus is getting fucked by Alexander.” Naturally the narrator is too well-educated to say such outright.

Finally the pair of Alexander and Rutilianus subsists in a dynamic tension with one more pair, Lucian and Rutilianus. Or, rather, we can see a triangulation here. On the one hand, the narrator does have a Roman friend of his own who supports him. We are informed, as if incidentally, that the governor of Cappadocia, “a friend of mine,” has lent him two men for his protection (55).³⁹ We could thus imagine two pairs each composed of a prominent provincial and a Roman backer. But on the other hand, the narrator himself actively competes with Alexander for influence over Rutilianus. Further, Lucian makes repeated efforts to dissuade Rutilianus from marrying Alexander’s daughter (Ρουτιλιανὸν ἐγὼ ἀπέτρεπον τοῦ γάμου; 54).

³⁹ We also happen to learn in this very same sentence something that Alexander himself learns there, namely that the narrator’s name is Lucian: καὶ ἔμαθεν ὡς ἐκεῖνος εἶπεν ὁ Λουκιανός . . . See Dubel (“Dialogue et autoportrait”) on “Lucian” within the works of Lucian.

Lucian is hereby getting in the way of Alexander's hopes for his oracle (τοῦ πάνυ προσκεῖσθαι ταῖς τοῦ χρηστηρίου ἐλπίσιν; 54). Alexander—the master of hopes and fears—is afraid that his hopes of acquiring power via Rutilianus will be dashed by Lucian. Accordingly, he produces an oracle about Lucian that is meant to eliminate this threat. The oracle that Rutilianus receives is in fact more descriptive of Alexander than of Lucian: “Night-wandering converse and unhallowed congress are his delight” (Νυκτιπλάνοις ὁάροις χαίρει κοίταις τε δυσάγνοις; 54). Alexander ironically indicts himself as he forges an oracle denouncing Lucian. We must ourselves turn this around and ask to what extent Lucian's own description of Alexander is not in fact a species of self-portrait emerging via a fantasy of the perverse other.

One notes that this response is given only when Rutilianus himself questions the oracle about Lucian (καί ποτε περὶ ἐμοῦ ἐρομένῳ τῷ Ῥουτιλιανῷ ἔφη; 54). However, let us recall that Celsus too has consulted Lucian concerning Alexander. That is, we can convert καί ποτε περὶ ἐμοῦ ἐρομένῳ τῷ Ῥουτιλιανῷ into καί ποτε περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐρομένῳ τῷ Κέλσῳ and thus tie section 54 to the very opening of the text as a whole.

These various pairings allow us to ask two follow-up questions: what is the relationship between language and authority? What is the relationship between man and man? Both questions are multi-dimensional and both entertain literal and metaphorical extensions of their constituent terms. There are many modes of language and many types of authority. Similarly, relationships can be free and equal or constrained and hierarchical. Ultimately, then, the text's vision of an amicable couple formed by writer and reader constitutes itself by means of a pointed refusal of other possible configurations of interpersonal relations in the text.

ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ VERSUS SEX

We have already been exploring the manner in which Alexander as a double for Lucian produces not so much the notion of “Lucian and Alexander” as “Lucian versus Alexander.” The double is a rival to be overcome. I wish to examine in more detail the particulars of this rivalry. To this end, one first needs to understand the core antitheses between the two characters before one can explore the

way in which these differences are articulated in a variety of dimensions throughout the text. This analysis will culminate in a portrait of “*Paideia* versus Sex” as a major motif of the *Alexander*.

Two key elements of Alexander’s character are religion and sex. In Lucian’s portrait, anyone who thoroughly grasps both of these aspects of Alexander has effectively understood Alexander himself. Two key elements of the narrator’s character are rationalism and education. Anyone who thoroughly grasps both of these aspects of the narrator has effectively understood the narrator himself. Our task, though, is to appreciate how this text forges an analogy between these issues such that we come to appreciate that: (1) as Alexander is to religion, so is the narrator to reason; (2) as Alexander is to sex, so is the narrator to education; and (3) as religion is to sex, so is reason to education.

Let us begin to look, then, at this network of associations by starting with the portrait of texts within the text. A variety of the details of Alexander’s story within the narrative resonate with aspects of the narrative itself. There is, then, a constant interplay between the content and the container, between Alexander and the *Alexander*. For example, people send scrolls to Alexander with their questions written on them. But these βιβλία are by no means the only ones we can find in the text. There is a competition of book against book within the book-that-is-the-*Alexander*. The most vivid example occurs when Alexander burns Epicurus’s books. There is also a second competition. The *Alexander* itself is a βιβλίον. Accordingly, there is a conflict between Alexander’s books and the book *Alexander*.

As mentioned above, Alexander burns a book of Epicurus, his book of *Authoritative Judgments* (Κυρίαί Δόξαι; 47). Alexander does so as if he were unaware of how this book does all sorts of good for those who encounter it (οὐκ εἰδὼς ὁ κατάρατος ὅσων ἀγαθῶν τὸ βιβλίον ἐκείνο τοῖς ἐντυχοῦσιν αἴτιον γίγνεται). And yet this description of Epicurus’s book closely matches the very last sentiment of the *Alexander* itself: οἶμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ τοῖς ἐντυχοῦσι χρήσιμόν τι ἔχειν δόξει ἢ γράφη . . . (61). The encounter with the text of the *Alexander* will, for those who know and understand how to meet up with it, be very much like an encounter with the Κυρίαί Δόξαι of Epicurus. In fact, the judgment that the reader of the *Alexander* will have upon encountering this text (δόξει) will be one that ratifies the authoritative status of Lucian himself as κύριος with respect to Alexander. The *Alexander* will do a similar good for its reader by passing a similar verdict:

ἀταραξία and ἐλευθερία await those who see the empty hopes and fears peddled by Alexander for what they are.

Conversely, an educated man already has available to him all that Alexander pretends to promise the masses. Lucian portrays Epicurus as the man who is truly holy and speaks with a truly divine voice: Ἐπικούρῳ . . . ἀνδρὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἱερῷ καὶ θεσπεσίῳ τὴν φύσιν . . . (61).⁴⁰ And here we need to make the comparison between Lucian's Epicurus and Alexander's first teacher. Note the kinds of lessons this unnamed charlatan from Tyana offered to his boy-toy: ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις λαμβάνει τις αὐτὸν ἐραστής γόης τῶν μαγείας καὶ ἐπφθὰς θεσπεσίους ὑπισχνουμένων καὶ χάριτας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐρωτικαῖς . . . (5). Lucian's tale promises divine charms of its own, only these are the spell cast by reason and an incantation that dispels fear once and for all. So too is this truly sacred text of the *Alexander* not a love-spell but rather an anti-erotic tract that blesses those who know how to read it: it indulges their *philia* for true *logoi*; it refuses to gratify any lust for carnal delights.

This matter of βιβία set against βιβλία extends beyond the contrast between Lucian and Epicurus on the one hand and Alexander and his oracles on the other. Lucian specifically declares that his own enumeration of charlatans' tricks can be compared to a similar catalogue to be found in one of Celsus's own works.⁴¹ Given that this declaration comes in the course of a discussion of forging seals on documents, we can see how *paideia* acts as a reliable signet ring that signs the *Alexander* itself. When a Lucian puts his stamp on this book, an Alexander will never be able to forge it. One can recall in this context the moment in the story where the narrator submits carefully sealed questions to the prophet (κατασημνηαμένου περιέρῳ; 53). And, like other petitioners, these questions are written on βιβλία. We are accordingly reminded of the assiduous care with respect to

⁴⁰ On this passage, see Caster's following comments: "Les termes de cet éloge sont hyperboliques et cette hyperbole était traditionnelle. Lucien connaît les usages . . . Mais il ne faudrait pas pour cela dénier toute valeur à ce document. Lucien force les termes, mais il est profondément convaincu de l'excellence de la pensée d'Epicure, puisque c'est un maître d'incrédulité" (*Lucien et la pensée religieuse*, 95).

⁴¹ ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ πρὸς τοῦτο ἐπινενοημένα, ὧν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον μεμνήσθαι ἀπάντων, ὥς μὴ ἀπειρόκαλοι εἶναι δοκοῖμεν, καὶ μάλιστα σοῦ ἐν οἷς κατὰ μάγων συνέγραψας . . . (*Alex.* 21). Note especially the use of ἀπειρόκαλοι: the narrative itself ought never to be tactless and uncultured, and this can be avoided by paying scrupulous attention to the relationship between narrator and addressee.

the βιβλίον that is the *Alexander*. Celsus's petition to the oracle of erudition (i.e., Lucian himself) is answered with this very book. The *Alexander* writes the truth of the false prophet. And this book bears the signet ring of Lucian on its surface. Meanwhile, Celsus can authenticate the truth of both book and its seal because he too is the true author of a book on false seals and the charlatans that use them.

So too an ironic interplay between various motifs taken from the domain of "bookishness" is woven throughout the text. Let us, then, indulge in some punning on the many meanings of the word ὑπομνήματα, a word that can designate note-books, journals and minutes. It is not accidental that the journals of Alexander are filled with oracles. They are all, of course, bogus. But some of them are fake fakes. If Alexander records an oracle that is manifestly errant, he effaces it and substitutes another in its place (τοῦτον μὲν τὸν χρησμὸν ἐξαίρει ἐκ τῶν ὑπομνημάτων, ἐντίθησιν δ' ἄλλον ἀντ' αὐτοῦ; 27). The memorial that Lucian leaves behind about Alexander is a record of the minutes of the official proceedings of that spurious public citizen known as Alexander. This text cannot be unwritten or rewritten without breaking and damaging the seal that Lucian sets upon it: the truth that only a rationalistic account can provide is a truth that cannot be unmade by a fraud such as Alexander.

In this context, it is not out of place to think of "the light of reason." The *Alexander* is illuminated by just such a light. The bright light of reason reveals things as they are. And the narrator shines this light into every dark corner of Alexander's story. This motif of light and reason, though, has its own parodic double within the text. Alexander announces to the people the name of the new god: "I am Glycon, from Zeus thrice removed, a light for mankind" (Εἰμὶ Γλύκων, τρίτον αἶμα Διός, φάος ἀνθρώποισιν; 18). The illumination that Glycon provides is naturally a false light in so far as the narrator is concerned. In fact, the narrator has just recounted how viewings of the snake-god were offered in a room that had only indistinct light (ἐν ἀμυδρῷ τῷ φωτί; 17). This allowed its artificial head to be taken for real.

In such circumstances only a certain kind of man could avoid being fooled: "The contrivance truly required some Democritus or even Epicurus himself or Metrodorus or some other man with an adamant resolve when it comes to such things. Consequently he would disbelieve and he would conjecture the true state of affairs. And if he was unable to discover how it was done, he would at least

have persuaded himself of this one thing in advance: the method of the trickery has eluded him, but the whole thing is bogus and cannot actually exist.”⁴² The sensible man already knows that Alexander is a fraud. He already has persuaded himself that Glycon brings not light to men but darkness. All that remains is for reason to determine how the fraud has been perpetrated.

The narrator of the *Alexander* proceeds from the very first section all the way through to the end to tell the story of the false prophet in a manner indicating his own omniscient appreciation of the cult. Though the character Lucian who appears within the text in sections 53 and 54 fails to appreciate his circumstances and almost comes to harm, the narrator, by contrast, knows an amazing amount about Alexander.⁴³ He can speak of his birth and youth, of his thoughts when he composed the cult, of his secret sexual encounters. The narrator also knows without a doubt just how each element of the fraud was in fact perpetrated, how the goose egg containing a snake was sealed with white lead and hidden in the mire, how the human head of Glycon was put together, how cranes’ windpipes were used to give the puppet the power of speech.

In short, the narrator writes from a position of perfect enlightenment. And he transmits to us a sense that we are seeing everything, that he has himself already thoroughly looked into the whole affair. In fact, if we assert that something remains hidden or indistinct despite this trope/*tropos* of omniscience that overcomes the τρόπος τῆς μαγγανείας, then we must ourselves be blockheads. Alexander’s obscure oracles allow a host of parasitical exegetes to set themselves up in order to make money interpreting the indistinct responses that people receive (καὶ ἥσαν τινες ἐξηγηταὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτο καθήμενοι; 49). But the narrator himself turns out to be the true exegete and the one who can unerringly interpret Alexander’s oracles for us. Meanwhile,

⁴² ὥστε πάνυ τὸ μηχανήμα ἐδεῖτο Δημοκρίτου τινὸς ἢ καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἐπικούρου ἢ Μητροδώρου ἢ τινος ἄλλου ἀδαμαντίνην πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα τὴν γνώμην ἔχοντος, ὡς ἀπιστῆσαι καὶ ὅπερ ἦν εἰκάσαι, καὶ εἰ μὴ εὖρεῖν τὸν τρόπον ἐδύνατο, ἐκεῖνο γοῦν προπεπεισμένου, ὅτι λέληθεν αὐτὸν ὁ τρόπος τῆς μαγγανείας, τὸ δ’ οὖν πᾶν ψευδὸς ἐστὶ καὶ γενέσθαι ἀδύνατον (17).

⁴³ Cf. Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 25. Also see Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 206, where he argues that the problems with the inset character are subversive of our appreciation of the narrator. But Branham’s position perhaps relies too much on seeing the presence of an orthodox Epicurean narrator. For a contrasting interpretation, one can refer again to the arguments of Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse*.

the *Alexander* offers itself up as pellucid. That is, exegesis of this text is superfluous: there is nothing unclear about it provided we ourselves are educated.

And one final touch remains: there exists a bust of Epicurus himself that was, like Alexander's Glycon, constructed so as to be able to talk.⁴⁴ The ironies of a talking bust of this arch-debunker of illusions are many.⁴⁵ We are not, of course, required to believe that Lucian had seen this head. However, Epicurus had long since been "mythologized" by Lucretius. And his status as "hero" and "prophet" is part of the sect's own anti-mythology. Thus, we can use the idea of such a bust to imagine a narrator who again doubles for Alexander, a man who comes across as a know-it-all—in the profoundest possible sense of the phrase—by putting words into an authoritative talking head. And, tellingly, the narrator is the most important figure here, not the head. That is, "Epicurus says" is a calque for "the narrator says."

We do not require of this text a real Epicurus or even any committed adherence to Epicureanism in a strict philosophical sense or within a looser contemporary sociological context. In the latter regard, Renée Piettre paints a portrait of philosophy in this era in which it effectively functions as a religion: "Nous somme apparemment en une période charnière, où les identités s'aiguisent dans la controverse, où la philosophie devient l'appui argumentatif et la forme la plus engagée des revendications religieuses."⁴⁶ This is a useful observation provided we qualify it somewhat in the present circumstances. Piettre herself consistently downplays the systematic irony with which Epicureans deploy religious discourse as a means of subverting it. And one must note in Alexander's own declarations the strong linking of "atheist" and "Epicurean" (cf. 38; 46). In the case of the

⁴⁴ See Frederik Poulsen, "Talking, Weeping and Bleeding Sculptures: A Chapter in the History of Religious Fraud," *Acta Archaeologica* 16 (1945): 178–95.

⁴⁵ Cf. Renée Piettre, "Un buste parlant d'Epicure, un passage de Lucien (Alexandre le faux prophète, 26): La philosophie au péril des religions," *Kernos* 15 (2002): 131–44, who walks through the valences of such a deceptive image from the standpoint of Epicureanism. Poulsen cannot countenance such. He notes that the person who drilled the hole in the head was not the one who carved it ("Talking, Weeping and Bleeding Sculptures," 181) and combines this observation with the anti-Epicurean import of a talking statue to conclude that the original bust was put to new use under a new name at some point (191).

⁴⁶ Piettre, "Un buste parlant d'Epicure," 143.

Alexander itself, however, all one needs to do is to substitute *paideia* for Piettre's "philosophie" and we come close to my own thesis regarding the form and function of this text: *paideia* has its own "revendications religieuses."

I will explore below the manner in which the narrative might in fact have more to it than meets the eye. However, we need to work through a few more themes before we will be ready to appreciate this fully. There is both a manifest and a latent irony concerning the question of "inheritance" in the *Alexander*. The old charlatan who first teaches Alexander is one of those people who promises to win inheritances for others (κλήρων διαδοχάς; 5). Yet this same man teaches Alexander his spells and appoints Alexander as his own inheritor and successor (κληρονόμος καὶ διάδοχος; 5). Alexander is the legitimate heir of illegitimate arts. Conversely, the narrator is the self-appointed heir to the legitimate world of letters. Literary inheritance has as its peculiar logic that *paideia* is a sort of property that can pass to any who would legitimately arrogate it to themselves. The educated make themselves into the heirs of bookish culture. By eschewing the path of learning Alexander betrayed his own intellect and inherited instead the art of deception. By embracing the path of learning the narrator inherited the legacy of Democritus and Epicurus. And with this same legacy he is able to disappropriate Alexander from his own ill-gotten gains. Because the narrator is an educated man and a legitimate heir to the metaphorical state/estate of *paideia*, he can demonstrate to all other educated men the illegitimacy of Alexander's concrete holdings.

In fact, the narrator comes close to disappropriating Alexander from himself. To this end, there is a conscious play on the etymology of Alexander's name within the text. Alexander himself even constructs an oracle that highlights the sense that he is a "Defender of Man" (ἄνδρὸς ἀλεξητήρως ὁμωνυμίην; 11). However, the ἀλεξ-stem has already appeared in the text in a manner that undercuts this proposition. After describing the body of Alexander, the narrator is about to depict his mind when he breaks off with an invocation of the gods: "Heracles, Defender from Evil and Zeus Averter of Ill and Twin Saviors, may my enemies and foes meet and keep company with such a man as this!" (ἀλεξίκακε Ἡράκλεις καὶ Ζεῦ ἀποτρόπαιε καὶ Διόσκουροι σωτήρες, πολέμοις καὶ ἐχθροῖς ἐντυχεῖν γένοιτο καὶ συγγενέσθαι τοιοῦτῳ τινί; 4). We have already seen that "to meet with" has broader resonances in this text, for it is exactly the verb

used of meeting up with a book of Epicurus or even this very book. Heracles the Defender, though, defends us from Alexander the Defender.

This is, in fact, the second time in the *Alexander* that we have met up with Heracles. He is alluded to in the opening section, where mention is made of the cleaning of the Augean stables. But in that passage it is the narrator himself who is undertaking a Herculean task of purging a mythical mass of shit and/or a mass of mythical shit. Indeed, the total mass of crap produced by Alexander is unspeakably large and we will find in this text only a few baskets of dung gathered as evidence of just what kind of κακία it is that the narrator has defended us against.⁴⁷

PAIDEIA AS NOT-SEX

Let us, finally, turn to *paideia* over erotics or education versus sex ed.⁴⁸ The *Alexander* is filled with the sort of cultured allusions that bespeak education and is addressed to a man who is himself educated and an author. More basically, the *Alexander* is written in a Greek that is not the spoken language of its day. Rather, this Greek is an Atticizing version that manifests its author's education with virtually every syllable.⁴⁹ It is never possible, then, to forget that the author is educated or that we as readers must ourselves be educated. Thus, though we may "light upon" the text and be imagined to do

⁴⁷ ὑποστήσομαι σοι τὸν ἄθλον, καὶ τὴν Αὐγέου βουστασίαν, εἰ καὶ μὴ πᾶσαν, ἀλλ' εἰς δύναμιν γε τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ ἀνακαθάρασθαι πειράσομαι, ὀλίγους ὅσους τῶν κοφίνων ἐκφορήσας, ὥς ἀπ' ἐκείνων τεκμαίροιο πόση πᾶσα καὶ ὥς ἀμύθητος ἦν ἡ κόπρος ἦν τρισχίλιοι βόες ἐν πολλοῖς ἔτεσιν ποιῆσαι ἐδύναντο (1). Cf. Brahmam, who notes that "Heracles as cleaner of the Augean stables was emblematic of the Cynic *parthēsiastēs*" (*Unruly Eloquence*, 266 n. 29).

⁴⁸ Cf. the discussion of the *Praeceptor Rhetorum* in Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*, 149–86.

⁴⁹ Cf. Roy J. Deferrari, *Lucian's Atticism: The Morphology of the Verb* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1916; repr., Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1969), 80: "Lucian has many variations from good Attic, some extensive and some isolated; but practically all are the result of a definite purpose, not of ignorance." Evaluations of the "purity" of Lucian's Greek naturally vary. On the multi-dimensional resonances of "Atticism," see Jacques Bompaire, "L'Atticisme de Lucien," in Billaut, *Lucien de Samosate*, 65–75: it is a linguistic phenomenon, an evocation of an intellectual milieu, a means of ornamenting one's works and a place where we can detect "l'esprit même de l'écrivain."

so, we are not for that any old chance readers.⁵⁰ Were we not at least in some measure akin to the author, we would not read this text. In fact, we could not read it.

Conversely, there is something aleatory about Alexander's education. His knowledge of quackery comes to him somewhat indirectly. As a young and attractive man he prostituted himself to any and all (ἀνέδην ἐπόρνενε καὶ συνῆν ἐπὶ μισθῷ τοῖς δεομένοις; 5).⁵¹ One of his johns was a fraud who trafficked in enchantments. He takes on Alexander as a helper and apprentice. There is a mutual love here: Alexander yearns after the man's wickedness, the man for Alexander's youthful bloom (οὐ μείον ἐρῶντα τῆς κακίας τῆς αὐτοῦ ἢ αὐτὸς τῆς ὥρας τῆς ἐκείνου; 5). Accordingly, Alexander receives a thorough education in trickery from his lover/teacher. The scene is a dark parody of the erotics of pedagogy.⁵² The educated reader might well see a burlesque of the relationship between Alcibiades and that other enchanter, Socrates. However, the "learned precedent" to which Alexander's lover appeals is one closer to his own home: Apollonius of Tyana. The lover himself came from Tyana and was fully informed of the "whole tragedy of Apollonius" (τὴν πᾶσαν αὐτοῦ τραγωδίαν εἰδόντων; 5). We can also note that διατριβή in the next sentence similarly plays with genre in as much as it evokes, *inter alia*, philosophy. The word can mean "pastime" or "waste of time." Given the context we would likely declare that the negative version of the word captures the sense best: "You can see the sort of man I am talking about, how he passed his time" (ὁρᾷς ἐξ οἷός σοι διατριβῆς ἀνθρώπων λέγω; 5). But διατριβή also evokes the world of the Platonic dialogues as well as the *Diatribes* of Epictetus.⁵³ Thus, the same phrase also means, "You can see the sort of man I am talking about, what school he comes from." We are constantly invited to reflect upon the "school" of the narrator and how he has passed his time so as to be able to pen this work, and thus it is useful to imagine the play between philosophical sects playing itself out at this moment as well.

⁵⁰ See again the use of ἐντυχεῖν at *Alex.* 61.

⁵¹ Cf. Jones, *Culture and Society*, 135: "Lucian alleges that Alexander began his career as a prostitute, an allegation too common to be taken seriously."

⁵² For a portrait of the normative "pedagogical contract" in antiquity, see Yun Lee Too, *Pedagogical Contract: The Economics of Teaching and Learning in the Ancient World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁵³ On the latter, see Barbara Wehner, *Die Funktion der Dialogstruktur in Epiktets Diatriben* (Philosophie der Antike 13; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000).

In any case, a teacher well versed in the tragedy of Apollonius proves invaluable. Alexander cashes in on his schooling in the art of semblances. One can also say that the course in “How to be a trickster” is taught by one of Alexander’s own tricks. That is, the connection between sex and teaching should not be forgotten. Moreover, this education entails both theatrical and sexual components. The association between sex and (misleading) appearances reappears later. When Alexander institutes his mysteries, they include a performance of Alexander having sex with the moon (39). The play is itself both real and fake: he never, of course, actually slept with the moon; thus the theatrical union perfectly represents the non-union that never took place. It is also true, however, that the fake union with the moon is very nearly a real union on stage with Rutilia. And he really has slept with this woman in the past even if he never did couple with the moon.

The true/fake theater of sex has further dimensions in the *Alexander*. Alexander is sleeping with women and boys, and the world around him winds up playing the hypocrite (ὑποκριτής). They act as if nothing improper is happening and, to the extent that they do recognize the true state of affairs, they even rejoice in this theater of absurdities. Men go so far as to aver that their children are only so many little performers within their own homes: they are “really” Alexander’s kids (42).⁵⁴ Thus, Alexander moves from a whore who sold himself promiscuously (ἀνέδην; 5) to a student of wickedness akin to a tragedy and, finally, to a wicked producer of his own sort of tragedies. At this juncture he is sleeping promiscuously with women and boys (γυναικάς τε ἀνέδην διαφθείρων καὶ παισὶ συνών). The great circle of vice is thus complete.

The narrator himself is, as we have seen, also a stage-manager. He insists on evoking the theatrical metaphor.⁵⁵ Alexander may put on sexy shows, but the narrator too insists on showing sex. The story of Alexander is ultimately declared to be a tragedy in section 60, and the narrator has unexpectedly become a parallel to the *erastês*

⁵⁴ Cf. Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 12–13: there even appears to be inscriptional evidence that supports the narrator’s scurrilous claim.

⁵⁵ On the theatrical quality of Lucian’s works more generally, see Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 19–20. Branham evokes John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius’ Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 275, in order to tie the stage metaphor to narratological issues.

of Alexander. That man knew from close quarters the whole tragedy of Apollonius. The narrator, though, knows from close quarters the whole tragedy of Alexander. There is, of course, a vehement refusal and repudiation of Alexander at work here. The narrator as *anterastês* loves in return/in anger. Who will be able to control the various dimensions of the narrative? Alexander stages his story to his own profit. The narrator restages it at Alexander's expense and, in the process, Alexander's sex and education are transformed into a diatribe against sex in the name of education.

We can see here another unexpected mirroring-with-a-difference between the narrator and Alexander. Alexander is a champion of a vile sort of Epicurean sensualism. He understands, as an Epicurean might, the role of hope and fear in men's lives, but he leverages his quasi-philosophical understanding only in the name of crass self-interest. Conversely, the narrator champions Epicurean rationalism. The narrator champions the version of Epicurus who saves people from the *Sturm und Drang* of the flesh and offers them true spiritual peace.

In this light, the burning of Epicurus's *Κυρίαί Δόξαι* occupies a special place in the narrative. It is introduced as a singular absurdity (ἐν γοῦν καὶ γελοιότατον ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος; 47). The work is praised by the narrator, but perhaps needlessly so because, "as you know" (ὥς οἶσθα), the *Κυρίαί Δόξαι* is the most beautiful of Epicurus's books. It contains a summary of the decrees of that philosopher's wisdom. But this same phrase, *κεφαλαιώδη περιέχον τῆς τάνδρὸς σοφίας τὰ δόγματα*, describes as well the *Alexander* if we only substitute *κακία* for *σοφία*. And while the narrator thinks it absurd that Alexander is acting as if this pyre were burning Epicurus himself (ὥς δῆθεν αὐτὸν καταφλέγων; 47), this same argument can be turned on the *Alexander*. The narrative is a sort of public bonfire of Alexander. Of course, the man himself is really not immolated and no book is consumed by flames. Instead, a book is forged in the fiery furnace of disgust.

Thus, even though "we know" all about the *Κυρίαί Δόξαι*, the narrator still takes it upon himself to summarize the chief points of this book as he passes his own "authoritative judgment" against Alexander's decision to burn it. Here we read of how the book produces peace and security and freedom from fear and fantasies and monstrosities. Empty hopes and excessive desires are quenched. It bestows good sense and imparts the truth. It purifies one's sensibilities. And all of

this does not take place via some sham rite with its various palaver, but instead the book employs straight thinking, truthfulness and frank talk.⁵⁶

The description of Epicurus's book applies as well to Lucian's. In fact, the language is virtually programmatic. Truthfulness, frank talk and freedom are repeatedly yoked in Lucian's works, and Παρρησιάζης or "Frank Speech" is the central figure of the *Piscator*.⁵⁷ The *Alexander* presents itself as the true story of a fake man. It uses straight thinking to tell the right story. It uses λόγος ὀρθός to tell a λόγος ὀρθός. It is free-spoken in the hopes of freeing men from the tyranny of hope and fear as well as from a specific tyrant, a man who enslaved the free in the name of gratifying his own pleasures.

"LUCIAN"

Finally, then, let us survey some of the chief points of the structure of the narration in the *Alexander*. The path along which the narrative proceeds is in fact a part of a philosophy of education that stands in opposition to everything that Alexander himself is and represents. The limpid clarity of this narration confronts and refutes in its very form the vatic obscurity of the false prophet.

⁵⁶ The material in this paragraph is a paraphrase of *Alex.* 47: οὐκ εἰδὼς ὁ κατάρματος ὅσον ἀγαθὸν τὸ βιβλίον ἐκείνο τοῖς ἐντυχούσιν αἴτιον γίγνεται, καὶ ὅσῃ αὐτοῖς εἰρήνην καὶ ἀταραξίαν καὶ ἐλευθερίαν ἐνεργάζεται, δειμάτων μὲν καὶ φασμάτων καὶ τεράτων ἀπαλλάττον καὶ ἐλπίδων ματαιῶν καὶ περιττῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, νοῦν δὲ καὶ ἀλήθειαν ἐντιθὲν καὶ καθαῖρον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὰς γνώμας, οὐχ ὑπὸ δαδὶ καὶ σκίλλῃ καὶ ταῖς τοιαύταις φλυαρίαις, ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὀρθῷ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ παρρησίᾳ.

⁵⁷ Examples of the connection between truth and free-speech occur throughout Lucian's corpus; see, for example, *Calumniae non temere credendum* 23; *Charon* 13; *Demonax* 11; *Dialogi mortuorum* 20.9; *Jupiter confutatus* 5; *Pseudologista* 1; *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 41; *Timon* 36; and *Vitarum auctio* 8. *Pseudologista* 4 offers the following: ὁ Ἐλεγχος, φίλος Ἀληθείᾳ καὶ Παρρησίᾳ θεός. On frank speaking in Lucian, see Glenn S. Holland, "Call Me Frank: Lucian's (Self-)Defense of Frank Speaking and Philodemus' *Peri Parrhesias*," in *Philodemus and the New Testament World* (ed. J. T. Fitzgerald, D. Obbink and G. S. Holland; NovTSup 111; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 246–67. Note especially that Holland offers an investigation of the relationship between Lucian and the *Epicurean* philosopher Philodemus's *περὶ Παρρησίας*. On free-speech in Lucian as evocative of Athenian democracy, Aristophanic comedy and the old Cynics, also see Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 33. Nevertheless, times have changed: Lucian's audience is the *pepaideumenos* of his day, not the Athenian of yesteryear or even the Hellenistic philosopher who came still later (cf. Holland, "Call Me Frank," 263–64). With respect to how free-speech and martyrdom are thematized within the Second Sophistic, see Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 135.

The status of “Lucian,” though, needs to be brought out more clearly. Lucian is the author of this text, the narrator within it and actor in some of its final scenes. As a narrator he is omniscient. He knows details of Alexander’s life that ought not to be available to a biographer, particularly one who is a sworn enemy. The character Lucian is not omniscient. He is in fact prone to hopes and fears himself when he augurs ill for his chances aboard a ship filled with Alexander’s men (56).⁵⁸ For his part, the author Lucian makes an omnipresent display of his education: as a “work of Lucian” the *Alexander* is but one moment in a broader tapestry of urbane prose that testifies to the authorized cultural authority of this virtuoso author. If Alexander’s books are filled with fake oracles, Lucian’s are filled with true tales of *paideia*. And among them is the *Alexander* itself.

All three of these figures—the character, the narrator and the author—defend us against evil, turn away ignorance and save us. The invocation and prayer of section 4, then, which called upon Heracles, Zeus and the Dioscuri, prove “prophetic” for the nature of the text as a whole. Even as the narrator prays against a wicked *psuchê* and *gnômê*, his text reveals a heroic character named Lucian, who really does fight against Alexander. Meanwhile, the narrative is apotropaic when it comes to the matter of credulous belief in the supernatural. The author Lucian by writing this and other works saves Greek culture from the ravages of interlopers who would invent from whole cloth simulated cults that only appear to belong within the tradition to which he himself lays jealous claim. As Ulrich Victor notes, the narrator does not criticize other, older oracles, the traditional pantheon or even Pythagoras: only Alexander is abused.⁵⁹ The text does not offer up reverence to the old religion *qua* religion, however; rather, it reveres traditional Greek culture *qua* tradition.

⁵⁸ The attempted assassination is a pure fiction and a typical slanderous cliché according to Caster, *Études sur ‘Alexandre ou le faux prophète’*, 76–77; Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, 480; and Hall, *Lucian’s Satire*, 27.

⁵⁹ Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 26. The Pythagorean Arignotos is also abused in the *Philopseudes*. Jones notes that “[t]he faintly Epicurean skepticism about conceptions of the gods is extended to beliefs about one of their most important functions, the issuing of advice” (*Culture and Society*, 45). That is, the Lucianic corpus is generally critical of oracles even as the *Alexander* carves out a space for the sanctity of the old, prestigious oracles. On the manner in which the *Alexander* is emblematic of Lucian’s treatment of oracles more generally, see Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse*, 255–56.

Let us examine more closely this investment in tradition. Jennifer Hall, summarizing Marcel Caster's position, notes that "Lucian avoids satirizing anything for which he does not have literary precedents . . . for the tradition has more artistic value in his eyes than observation of contemporary life."⁶⁰ Branham further proposes that if Alexander is reinterpreting native religious traditions, then "Lucian's satiric treatment of him represents a critique from the point of view of conservative, cosmopolitan, pagan traditionalists, that is, of his audience of *pepaideumenoi* such as Celsus."⁶¹

This "conservatism" and fixation on tradition on Lucian's part hardly prevents Lucian from himself being a man of his age and very much interested in his own here and now.⁶² This literary nostalgia was itself a contemporary movement. Whitmarsh describes the manner in which Lucian is in fact self-consciously innovative: the incorporation of tradition need not preclude a present or current agenda as well.⁶³ Barry Baldwin also takes issue with Jacques Bompaigne's insistence that "Lucian's use of the Greek literary heritage is an end in itself." Instead, he says, "I see it as a set of conventions which Lucian used to relate his animadversions to contemporary issues and targets."⁶⁴ In short, the attack on religious innovation in the name of cultural tradition itself produces an innovative cultural performance.

Like Alexander, Lucian is the author of a mystery cult of his own. He too invents from whole cloth a character Lucian who belongs to the aristocratic tradition of Greek *paideia*. By staging Alexander for us—remember, the diction of "tragedy" runs throughout the narrative frame—Lucian is creating a theater of his own in which he puts on a play of a man who put on plays. Even as Alexander stages

⁶⁰ Hall, *Lucian's Satire*, 196. Her own position is that this avoidance is mostly a matter of "good taste" (206) if Lucian is to refrain from offending his audience. Yet this argument requires a performative context for the *Alexander* that I am not ready to accept.

⁶¹ Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 264 n. 8. Jones also comments on Lucian's essentially conservative aesthetic tastes (*Culture and Society*, 149–59). Whitmarsh offers a useful formula when thinking about the authors of this period: "[Literature] is, moreover, inevitably elitist: 'literature' is inherently bound up with issues of cultural 'value' and distinction" (*Greek Literature*, 4). On the "anti-generic and parasitical" quality of Lucian's writing, cf. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 249.

⁶² This point is emphasized by Panagopoulos, "Lucian ou la vraie vie."

⁶³ Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 78.

⁶⁴ Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian*, 4.

mystery plays during the initiatory rites for his cult, Lucian is himself showing the dramatic quality of the rites of *paideia*. These meta-rites specifically include the revealing of that which is secret about Alexander's rites.⁶⁵ Betraying one mystery cult institutes another.

The reader is also conjured in the process. As with "Lucian," there are similarly three versions of "the reader." First, there is a third party, "Celsus." Celsus is already an initiate himself. He already knows about Apollonius of Tyana. He has already written a book against charlatans. Celsus, the man who already knows, causes Lucian to write a book about a mystery he already knows in advance to be unmysterious. He wants only to watch the revelatory pageant one more time, to make another learned pilgrimage, to visit the rites of *paideia* yet again. "As you know," however, is woven throughout the text. Thus, Celsus is not exactly a third person, he is always also the second person, "you." Therefore, the reader who is not Celsus is constantly invited to assimilate his or her views to that of Celsus's. The narrative constructs a space for a special kind of "you" as a result, one wherein the reader is encouraged to read as a Celsus—not as a new initiate, but as a high priest in his or her own right. In fact, our own gesture whereby we reread the *Alexander* and produce learned commentary on it only reinforces the rites of *paideia*.⁶⁶ The third reader, then, the "chance reader" imagined at the very end of the text, is no random figure. Anyone who genuinely chanced upon the text would long since have ceased to be a mere outsider to the mystery of *paideia* as it pertains to Alexander by the time he or she read these final words. The narrative thrust is in fact to turn all chance readers into old hands when it comes to the Mysteries of Education. All readers are converted into spectators who behold the unveiling of the mystery of Alexander's fraud in the name of the consolidation of their own cult of educated rationalism.

The narrative frame of Lucian's piece offers us our first clues that the treatise involves not merely the exposition of a colorful story. The narrator—a figure we will have to call "Lucian" by the end,

⁶⁵ The verb for this revelation, *μηνύειν*, appears only once in the text. Alexander's spies in Rome "reveal in advance" the questions that are going to be sent to him (*προεμήνυνον*; 37). Revealing-in-advance, though, does have its echoes with the logic of reading the *Alexander* itself.

⁶⁶ Ironically, Branham's "unmasking" of the narrator thus only proves that Branham himself has been fully initiated into the rites of the text (see *Unruly Eloquence*, 206–10).

since that is the name he eventually gives us—first claims that this is being written to gratify a request. But then he demurs: should one write about such a man? Were it not better for him to be a spectacle in the amphitheater rather than an object of learned attention? Alexander, then, is an object that one ought to refuse from polite discourse. And yet it is by the very refusal of an Alexander that this discourse forges the boundaries of its own community. The amphitheater proper conjures an imaginary community by gathering people to watch a spectacle of destruction wherein the one who provides the show sees to it that some “other”—a foreigner, a criminal or both—meets a spectacular end. Lucian, the one who provides this text, builds in the *Alexander* an amphitheater where the learned assemble to watch a criminal torn to shreds, skewered by the poisoned pen of erudition. This erudition, though, is wielded by a Lucian who is simultaneously author, narrator and character.

But let us focus in more detail on the idea of “refusal” and the community that emerges in the wake of the statement “No, I am not that.” The refusal of Alexander is not his repression. That is, much of him remains available to consciousness. Indeed, the point of the debunking is to make him almost wholly available to consciousness. Alexander is captured by discourse and thoroughly known. Everything about his magical practices is carefully laid out.⁶⁷ All of the cards must be set on the table, even if that at times means that Lucian “reveals” things about Alexander that, though entirely plausible, nevertheless seem to reveal more specific knowledge than one finite historical actor might reasonably have of another who was his sworn enemy.

There is throughout the text an insistence upon recognition. Who will be recognized? As what? For what? Lucian has Roman political connections and a variety of pretensions to be taken seriously. And yet so too does Alexander. In fact, Alexander is taken more seriously and has more alliances than does Lucian. The text thus asks of its addressee and its broader audience that they fall in love with the truth of this rationalist debunking of Alexander rather than falling prey to his deceitful religious wiles.

⁶⁷ Cf. Jones on the *Philopseudes*: “Lucian’s knowledge of magical beliefs and practices is very exact” (*Culture and Society*, 48).

To “fall in love with the truth” is not an over-statement. The *Alexander* ends with this very image: the addressee has an *erôs pros alêtheian*, which is part and parcel of his *sophia*: ὃν ἐγὼ πάντων μάλιστα θαυμάσας ἔχω ἐπὶ τε σοφίᾳ καὶ τῷ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἔρωτι (61). Men who can recognize the truth of the story of Alexander are thus bound to one another by means of this love, precisely as they turn away from the hyper-eroticism of Alexander himself. Alexander’s own youth is suffused with sex: his mentor in mummerly desires Alexander’s good looks; Alexander falls in love with his wickedness. Love of the body and love of the bad thus make for a fitting exchange. Conversely, at the broader level of the *Alexander* we exchange both of these illicit loves for our own love of the truth as abstraction and for the chaste bonds of education.

Lucian thus presents his work as a vindication of Epicurean rationalism and the scientific skepticism that any man of learning ought to possess.⁶⁸ The focus on Epicurus throughout the text, though, allows us to note another moment of lost libido wherein Lucian un-represses Alexander in order to re-repress the libido Alexander arouses. The whole acts as a sort of burlesque of Freudian psychoanalysis: Where Alexander’s id was, there should the ego of the biographer be. And yet what of the biographer’s id, what of his desires? The biographer’s libido is inscribed as a chaste *cathexis* to the community of learned men. Epicurean sensualism vanishes and is replaced by Epicurean rationalism. The “I” of the educated man is constituted by staging a “necessary detour” through the forbidden “it” of ignorance, pleasure and charlatanism. The abstract satisfaction of *paideia* substitutes itself for the immanent satisfactions of the flesh.

⁶⁸ Hall helps to qualify the sense in which specific philosophical commitment or allegiance is required. Cf. Hall, *Lucian’s Satire*, 169–70: “These humorous references to the various sects can hardly be said to make great demands on the reader’s knowledge of Greek philosophy or that of Lucian’s audience: they are the sort of thing that anyone who has dozed his way through a course of philosophy lectures at some time is likely to remember.” Also see Hall’s following comment: “It is the negative side of Epicureanism, Cynicism, and Scepticism that appeals to Lucian, that is, the attitude of the Epicureans and Cynics towards superstition and the Sceptic and Cynic ridicule of the dogmatists” (*Lucian’s Satire*, 197, following R. Helm, “Lukianos,” *PW* (1927): 13.2:1725–77). The emphasis, then, is always on being a *pepaïduēmenos* and not a philosopher.

CONCLUSION

Alexander's rites begin by scaring away Christians and Epicureans. Alexander's god may not exactly be a jealous god, but his religious charade definitely opposes these other sects. Though they appear in the text only long enough to be shown the door, one assumes that the Christians decry Alexander as a fraud because they know that his god cannot be God. And yet this is exactly the perspective advocated in Lucian's pro-Epicurean text. We know that Alexander is a fraud because we know that what he claims to be true cannot be true.

Lucian's essay thus paints a portrait of a disputed frontier. Three sovereign sects are making competing demands for official recognition. The story of the Christians has been told elsewhere and, more importantly, it is pointedly not told here.⁶⁹ They are up-and-comers and their monotheism, if nothing else, sets them apart. Alexander is new as well. Alexander innovates. His *bricolage* takes place within the traditions of the Greco-Roman mystery cult, even if his innovations are decried as aberrations and the fever-dreams of a sex- and money-crazed man.

Lucian champions the community of learning, old books and old power structures. In so doing, he attempts to forge a sort of "secular humanism" that becomes a reservoir for a species of chaste piety that safeguards the old order even when it is inherited-*cum*-appropriated

⁶⁹ On the relationship between the *Alexander* and Christianity, see Victor, *Lukian von Samosata*, 50; Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian*, 101–3, and Hans Dieter Betz, *Lukian und das Neue Testament: Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen: Ein Beitrag zum Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti* (TU 76/5.21; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1961). The last title explores in detail the relationship between the world of Lucian's texts and that of the New Testament. Betz also articulates the agenda-setting category of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ (*Lukian und das Neue Testament*, 100–43). The θεῖος ἀνὴρ is a recognizable type in a variety of ancient texts, including, of course, the New Testament. See *De morte Peregrinus*, then, as a parallel text for the *Alexander*: again the narrator unveils a fraud's cheats. But in this instance Peregrinus numbers among his dupes the Christians of Palestine when he masters and ultimately subverts Christian dogma: Peregrinus becomes their leader and he even takes on a Christ-like role relative to the community (*Peregr.* 11). On Peregrinus, see Jones, *Culture and Society*, 117–32. It will also be noted that one of Alexander's "inspirations," Apollonius of Tyana, is also a Christ-like figure. For more on these *Gottmenschen* within our literary sources, see Thomas Paulsen, "Verherrlichung und Verspottung: Die Gestalt des 'Gottmenschen' bei Philostrat und Lukian," in *Gottmenschen: Konzepte existentieller Grenzüberschreitungen im Altertum* (ed. G. Binder, B. Effe and R. F. Glej; Bochumer altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 55; Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003), 97–120.

by a newcomer. An uncharitable snob might denounce a man like Lucian as a provincial and non-Greek. To the extent, though, that Lucian's readers take pleasure in the "truth" of this tale and themselves re-invest in the cult of learning required to appreciate it to the fullest, Lucian himself becomes the prophet of the revealed mystery of *paideia*.

Lucian challenges Alexander to answer three questions in his oracles: "Are you bald?," "Where was Homer born?" and "When will Alexander be found out?" Lucian himself already knows these things. The light of learning leads his readers to a knowledge of the same. "When will Alexander be found out?" He has already been found out by anyone who has had enough schooling to know where Homer was born.⁷⁰ All that really remains is for us to see Alexander's vile body laid bare by Lucian. Why this unveiling should give us pleasure, though, is itself a second sort of mystery that also ought to be unveiled if not debunked.

⁷⁰ Actually, the question has innumerable learned answers. This is part of the trap for Alexander: to commit oneself to a single one of them is to betray a kind of ignorance even among one's erudition. Also see Jones's comment in this regard: "When Lucian put [this] question to Alexander, he was thinking both of the familiar puzzle and also of the city of Amastris, which was the center of opposition to the oracle. For Amastris was one of the many cities which claimed to be the poet's birthplace, and it proudly displayed his portrait on its coins" (*Culture and Society*, 145).

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